

DIE VERHALE VAN
NARNIA

Prins Kaspian

C.S. LEWIS

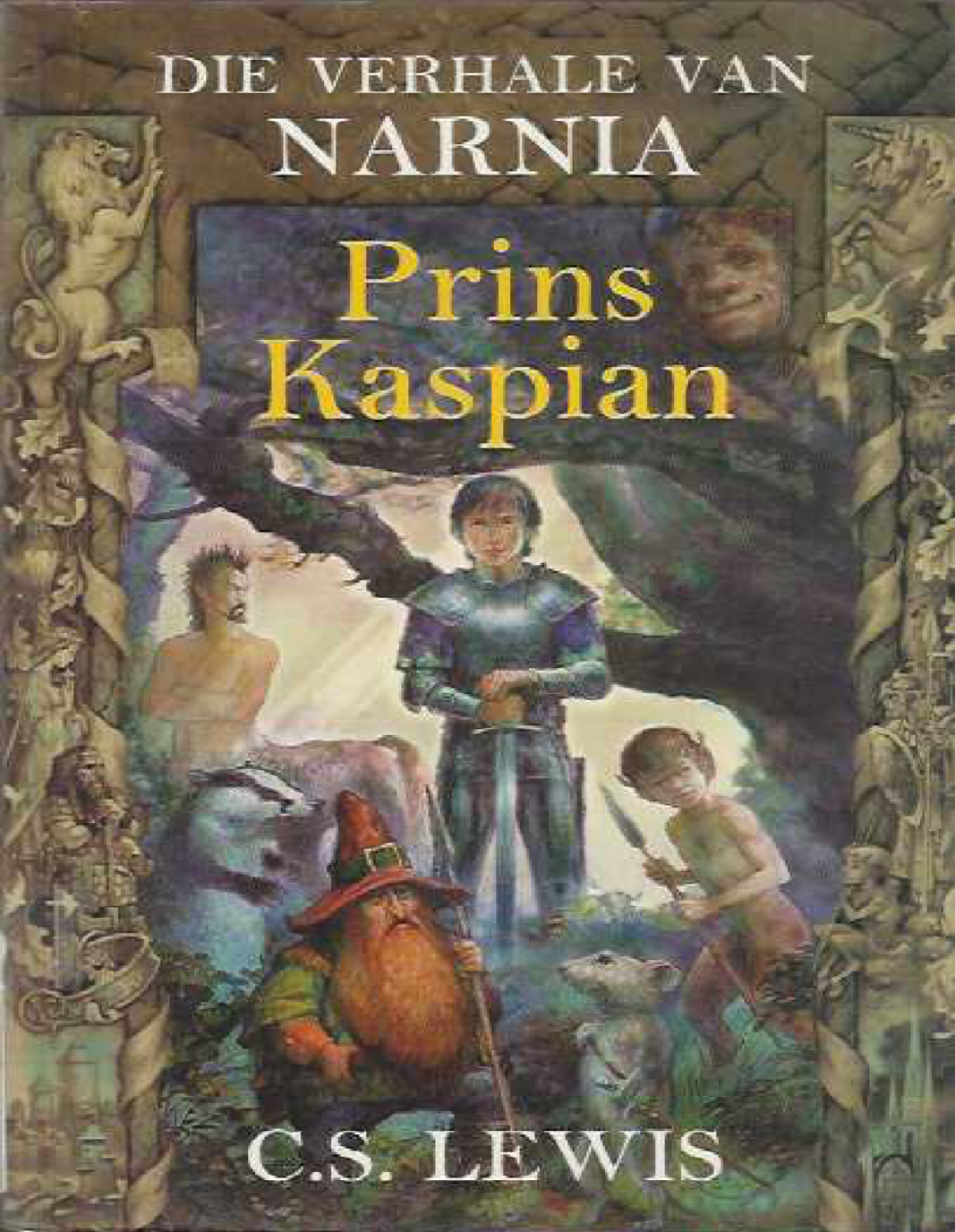


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DIE VERHALE VAN NARNIA

In leesorde soos voorgestel deur C.S. Lewis

Die towenaar se neef

Die leeu, die heks en die hangkas

Die perd en sy seun

Prins Kaspian

PRINS KASPIAN

C.S. Lewis

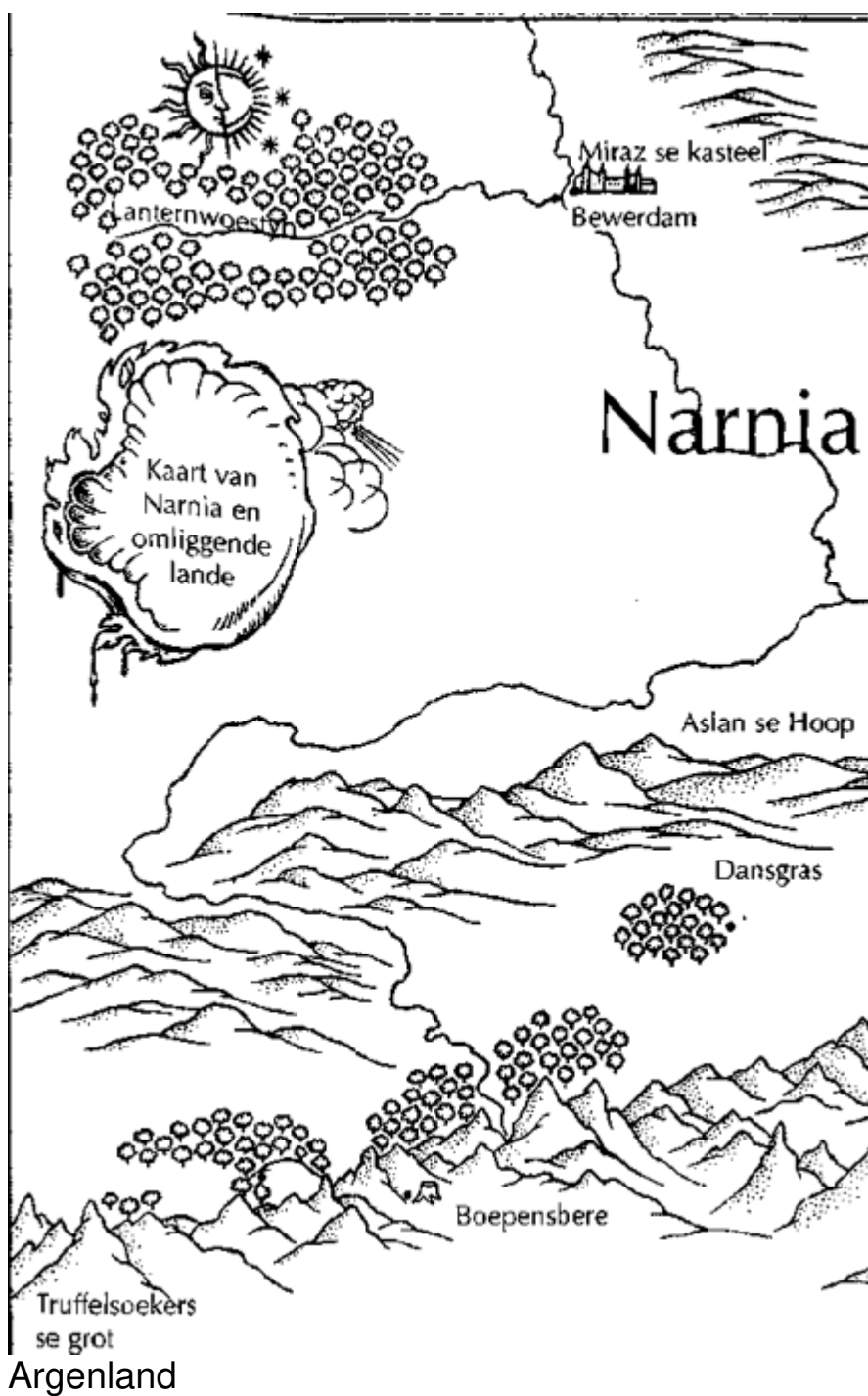
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Argenland

Wilde lande van die Noorde





CHAPTER ONE

THE ISLAND

ONCE THERE WERE FOUR CHILDREN whose names were Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy, and it has been told in another book called *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* how they had a remarkable adventure. They had opened the door of a magic wardrobe and found themselves in a quite different world from ours, and in that different world they had become Kings and Queens in a country called Narnia. While they were in Narnia they seemed to reign for years and years; but when they came back through the door and found themselves in England again, it all seemed to have taken no time at all. At any rate, no one noticed that they had ever been away, and they never told anyone except one very wise grown-up.

That had all happened a year ago, and now all four of them were sitting on a seat at a railway station with trunks and playboxes piled up round them. They were, in fact, on their way back to school. They had traveled together as far as this station, which was a junction; and here, in a few minutes, one train would arrive and take the girls away to one school, and in about half an hour another train would arrive and the boys would go off to another school. The first part of the journey, when they were all together, always seemed to be part of the holidays; but now when they would be saying good-bye and going different ways so soon, everyone felt that the holidays were really over and everyone felt their term-time feelings beginning again, and they were all rather gloomy and no one could think of anything to say. Lucy was going to boarding school for the first time.

It was an empty, sleepy, country station and there was hardly anyone on the platform except themselves. Suddenly Lucy gave a sharp little cry, like someone who has been stung by a wasp.

"What's up, Lu?" said Edmund—and then suddenly broke off and made a noise like "Ow!"

"What on earth—" began Peter, and then he too suddenly changed what he had been going to say. Instead, he said, "Susan, let go! What are you doing? Where are you dragging me to?"

"I'm not touching you," said Susan. "Someone is pulling *me*. Oh—oh—oh—stop it!"

Everyone noticed that all the others' faces had gone very white.

"I felt just the same," said Edmund in a breathless voice. "As if I were being dragged along. A most frightful pulling—ugh! it's beginning again."

"Me too," said Lucy. "Oh, I can't bear it."

"Look sharp!" shouted Edmund. "All catch hands and keep together."

This is magic—I can tell by the feeling. Quick!”

“Yes,” said Susan. “Hold hands. Oh, I do wish it would stop—oh!”

Next moment the luggage, the seat, the platform, and the station had completely vanished. The four children, holding hands and panting, found themselves standing in a woody place—such a woody place that branches were sticking into them and there was hardly room to move. They all rubbed their eyes and took a deep breath.

“Oh, Peter!” exclaimed Lucy. “Do you think we can possibly have got back to Narnia?”

“It might be anywhere,” said Peter. “I can’t see a yard in all these trees. Let’s try to get into the open—if there is any open.”

With some difficulty, and with some stings from nettles and pricks from thorns, they struggled out of the thicket. Then they had another surprise. Everything became much brighter, and after a few steps they found themselves at the edge of the wood, looking down on a sandy beach. A few yards away a very calm sea was falling on the sand with such tiny ripples that it made hardly any sound. There was no land in sight and no clouds in the sky. The sun was about where it ought to be at ten o’clock in the morning, and the sea was a dazzling blue. They stood sniffing in the sea-smell.

“By Jove!” said Peter. “This is good enough.”

Five minutes later everyone was barefooted and wading in the cool clear water.

“This is better than being in a stuffy train on the way back to Latin and French and Algebra!” said Edmund. And then for quite a long time there was no more talking, only splashing and looking for shrimps and crabs.

“All the same,” said Susan presently, “I suppose we’ll have to make some plans. We shall want something to eat before long.”

“We’ve got the sandwiches Mother gave us for the journey,” said Edmund. “At least I’ve got mine.”

“Not me,” said Lucy. “Mine were in my little bag.”

“So were mine,” said Susan.

“Mine are in my coat-pocket, there on the beach,” said Peter. “That’ll be two lunches among four. This isn’t going to be such fun.”

“At present,” said Lucy, “I want something to drink more than something to eat.”

Everyone else now felt thirsty, as one usually is after wading in salt water under a hot sun.

“It’s like being shipwrecked,” remarked Edmund. “In the books they always find springs of clear, fresh water on the island. We’d better go and look for them.”

“Does that mean we have to go back into all that thick wood?” said Susan.

“Not a bit of it,” said Peter. “If there are streams they’re bound to come down to the sea, and if we walk along the beach we’re bound to come to them.”

They all now waded back and went first across the smooth, wet sand and then up to the dry, crumbly sand that sticks to one’s toes, and began putting on their shoes and socks. Edmund and Lucy wanted to leave them behind and do their exploring with bare feet, but Susan said this would be a mad thing to do. “We might never find them again,” she pointed out, “and we shall want them if we’re still here when night comes and it begins to be cold.”

When they were dressed again they set out along the shore with the sea on their left hand and the wood on their right. Except for an occasional seagull it was a very quiet place. The wood was so thick and tangled that they could hardly see into it at all; and nothing in it moved—not a bird, not even an insect.

Shells and seaweed and anemones, or tiny crabs in rock-pools, are all very well, but you soon get tired of them if you are thirsty. The children’s feet, after the change from the cool water, felt hot and heavy. Susan and Lucy had raincoats to carry. Edmund had put down his coat on the station seat just before the magic overtook them, and he and Peter took it in turns to carry Peter’s greatcoat.

Presently the shore began to curve round to the right. About quarter of an hour later, after they had crossed a rocky ridge which ran out into a point, it made quite a sharp turn. Their backs were now to the part of the sea which had met them when they first came out of the wood, and now, looking ahead, they could see across the water another shore, thickly wooded like the one they were exploring.

“I wonder, is that an island or do we join on to it presently?” said Lucy.

“Don’t know,” said Peter, and they all plodded on in silence.

The shore that they were walking on drew nearer and nearer to the opposite shore, and as they came round each promontory the children expected to find the place where the two joined. But in this they were disappointed. They came to some rocks which they had to climb and from the top they could see a fair way ahead and—“Oh, bother!” said Edmund, “it’s no good. We shan’t be able to get to those other woods at all. We’re on an island!”

It was true. At this point the channel between them and the opposite coast was only about thirty or forty yards wide; but they could now see that this was its narrowest place. After that, their own coast bent round to the right again and they could see open sea between it and the mainland. It was obvious that they had already come much more than half-way round the island.



“Look!” said Lucy suddenly. “What’s that?” She pointed to a long, silvery, snake-like thing that lay across the beach.

“A stream! A stream!” shouted the others, and, tired as they were, they lost no time in clattering down the rocks and racing to the fresh water. They knew that the stream would be better to drink farther up, away from the beach, so they went at once to the spot where it came out of the wood. The trees were as thick as ever, but the stream had made itself a deep course between high mossy banks so that by stooping you could follow it up in a sort of tunnel of leaves. They dropped on their knees by the first brown, dimply pool and drank and drank, and dipped their faces in the water, and then dipped their arms in up to the elbow.

“Now,” said Edmund, “what about those sandwiches?”

“Oh, hadn’t we better save them?” said Susan. “We may need them far worse later on.”

“I do wish,” said Lucy, “now that we’re not thirsty, we could go on feeling as not-hungry as we did when we *were* thirsty.”

“But what about those sandwiches?” repeated Edmund. “There’s no good saving them till they go bad. You’ve got to remember it’s a good deal hotter here than in England and we’ve been carrying them about in pockets for hours.” So they got out the two packets and divided them into four portions, and nobody had quite enough, but it was a great deal better than nothing. Then they talked about their plans for the next meal. Lucy wanted to go back to the sea and catch shrimps, until someone pointed out that they had no nets. Edmund said they must gather gulls’ eggs from the rocks, but when they came to think of it they couldn’t remember having seen any gulls’ eggs and wouldn’t be able to cook them if they found any. Peter thought to himself that unless they had some stroke of luck they would soon be glad to eat eggs raw, but he didn’t see any point in saying this out loud. Susan said it was a pity they had eaten the sandwiches so soon. One or two tempers very nearly got lost at this stage. Finally Edmund said:

“Look here. There’s only one thing to be done. We must explore the wood. Hermits and knights-errant and people like that always manage to live somehow if they’re in a forest. They find roots and berries and things.”

“What sort of roots?” asked Susan.

"I always thought it meant roots of trees," said Lucy.

"Come on," said Peter, "Ed is right. And we must try to do something. And it'll be better than going out into the glare and the sun again."

So they all got up and began to follow the stream. It was very hard work. They had to stoop under branches and climb over branches, and they blundered through great masses of stuff like rhododendrons and tore their clothes and got their feet wet in the stream; and still there was no noise at all except the noise of the stream and the noises they were making themselves. They were beginning to get very tired of it when they noticed a delicious smell, and then a flash of bright color high above them at the top of the right bank.

"I say!" exclaimed Lucy. "I do believe that's an apple tree."

It was. They panted up the steep bank, forced their way through some brambles, and found themselves standing round an old tree that was heavy with large yellowish-golden apples as firm and juicy as you could wish to see.

"And this is not the only tree," said Edmund with his mouth full of apple. "Look there—and there."

"Why, there are dozens of them," said Susan, throwing away the core of her first apple and picking her second. "This must have been an orchard—long, long ago, before the place went wild and the wood grew up."

"Then this was once an inhabited island," said Peter.

"And what's that?" said Lucy, pointing ahead.

"By Jove, it's a wall," said Peter. "An old stone wall."

Pressing their way between the laden branches they reached the wall. It was very old, and broken down in places, with moss and wallflowers growing on it, but it was higher than all but the tallest trees. And when they came quite close to it they found a great arch which must once have had a gate in it but was now almost filled up with the largest of all the apple trees. They had to break some of the branches to get past, and when they had done so they all blinked because the daylight became suddenly much brighter. They found themselves in a wide open place with walls all round it. In here there were no trees, only level grass and daisies, and ivy, and gray walls. It was a bright, secret, quiet place, and rather sad; and all four stepped out into the middle of it, glad to be able to straighten their backs and move their limbs freely.



HOOFSTUK 1

Die eiland



In die boek *Die leeu, die heks en die hangkas* het Peter, Susan, Edmund en Lucy 'n vreemde avontuur beleef. Hulle het 'n betowerde hangkas oopgemaak en 'n wêreld binnegegaan wat heeltemal anders as ons s'n is. Hulle was konings en koninginne van die land Narnia. Terwyl hulle in Narnia was, het dit gevoel asof hul bewind jare en jare duur, maar toe hulle weer deur die hangkas terug huis toe is, het hulle gou agtergekom dat daar absoluut geen tyd

verbygegaan het nie. Niemand het eens besef hulle was weg nie, en hulle het ook besluit om vir niemand, behalwe 'n baie wyse volwassene, te vertel wat gebeur het nie.

Dit alles het 'n jaar gelede gebeur en nou sit die vier- stuks op 'n bank by die stasie met stapels trommels en sakke om hulle. Hulle is op pad terug skool toe. Hulle het saam tot by hierdie stasie, wat 'n aansluitingspoorweg is, gereis. Oor 'n paar minute sal 'n trein kom en die meisies na een skool neem en min of meer 'n halfuur later sal 'n ander trein kom en dan sal die seuns na 'n ander skool toe gaan. Die eerste deel van die reis, wanneer almal nog saam is, voel altyd nog soos vakansie, maar binnekort moet hulle mekaar groet en verskillende rigtings inslaan. Dit laat hulle besef dat die vakansie nou regtig oor is - almal kry daardie begin van die kwartaal gevoel; hulle is swaarmoedig en kan aan niks dink om te sê nie. Boonop gaan Lucy vir die eerste keer kosskool toe.

Dit is 'n verlate, slaperige plattelandse stasie en daar is feitlik niemand op die perron nie, net hulle. Skielik gee Lucy 'n klein gillettjie, nes of 'n perdeby haar gestee het.

“Wat gaan aan, Lu?” vra Edmund — en toe onderbreek hy homself skielik en maak 'n geluid wat soos “Au!” klink.

“Wat de dinges —” begin Peter en toe onderbreek hy homself ook skielik en sê, “Los my uit, Susan! Wat doen jy? Hoekom trek jy so aan my?”

“Ek raak nie aan jou nie,” sê Susan. “Iemand trek aan *my*. O — o — o — hou op!”

Hulle kan sien dat almal se gesigte baie wit geword het.

“Ek het dit ook gevoel,” sê Edmund skor. “Dit was as- of iets of iemand aan my trek, of eintlik aan my pluk. Au! Dit begin al weer!”

“Ek voel dit ook,” sê Lucy. “O, ek hou niks hiervan nie.”

“Pas op!” skree Edmund. “Vat hande en bly bymekaar. Dit is toordery — ek kan dit *voel*. Maak gou!”

“Ja,” sê Susan. “Vat hande. O, ek wens dit wil ophou - oe!”

Die volgende oomblik verdwyn die bagasie, die bank, die perron en die stasie heeltemal. Die vier kinders hou hygend hande vas. Hulle bevind hul in 'n beboste plek — so dig begroei dat die takke hulle steek en hulle hul skaars kan roer. Hulle vryf hul oë en trek hul asems diep in.

“O Peter!” roep Lucy uit. “Dink jy ons is terug in Narnia?”

“Dit kan enige plek wees,” sê Peter. “Ek kan nie 'n tree voor my sien met al hierdie bome nie. Kom ons probeer by 'n oopte kom — as hier so iets is.”

Met groot moeite — die netels steek en die dorings krap hulle — sukkel die kinders uit die ruigte. Daar wag nog 'n verrassing op

hulle. Alles word baie helderder en na nog 'n paar tree is hulle op die rand van die bos. Hulle kyk op 'n sandstrand af. 'n Paar tree verder spoel 'n baie kalm see met sulke klein rimpelings oor die sand dat dit skaars 'n geluid maak. Daar is geen land in sig nie en nie 'n wolk in die lug nie. Die son sit min of meer waar dit teen tienuur in die oggend behoort te wees en die water is 'n verblindende blou. Hulle asem die geur van die see diep in.

“Sjoe!” sê Peter. “Dis wonderlik.”

Vyf minute later stap almal kaalvoet in die helder koel water rond.

“Dit is beter as om in 'n bedompige trein op pad terug na Latyn en Frans en Algebra te wees!” sê Edmund. En daarna sê niemand vir 'n redelike lang ruk iets nie; almal plas rond op soek na garnale en krappe.

“Dit mag so wees,” sê Susan 'n rukkie later, “maar ons moet seker begin planne maak. Ons gaan binnekort iets te ete wil hê.”

“Ons het die toebroodjies wat Ma vir ons saamgegee het,” antwoord Edmund. “Wel, ek het myne.”

“Nie ek nie,” sê Lucy. “Myne is in my klein sakkie.”

“Myne ook,” sê Susan.

“Myne is in my jas se sak daar op die strand,” kondig Peter aan. “Dit beteken twee middagetes vir vier mense. Dit gaan nie juis vullend wees nie.”

“Op die oomblik,” sê Lucy, “wil ek eerder iets drink as iets eet.”

Almal is nou baie dors, soos 'n mens gewoonlik is na- dat jy in die warm son en die soutwater gespeel het.

“Dis soos om skipbreukelinge te wees,” merk Edmund op. “In boeke kry hulle altyd fonteine met skoon, vars water op die eiland. Ons moet net soek.”

“Beteken dit ons moet weer by daardie digte woud in- gaan?” vra Susan.

“Jy's lekker laf,” sê Peter. “As daar enige stroompies is, dan sal hulle afkom see toe en as ons langs die strand stap, sal ons hulle kry.”

Nou stap almal terug deur die water, eers oor die gladde, nat sand en toe op teen die droë, krummelrige sand wat aan hul tone kleef. Daar trek hulle hul sokkies en skoene aan. Edmund en Lucy wil hulle s'n net daar los en die plek kaalvoet verken, maar Susan sê dit sal malligheid wees. “Netnou kry ons die goed nooit weer nie,” keer sy, “en ons gaan dit nodig hê as ons nog hier is wanneer dit nag word en ons begin koud kry.”

Toe almal aangetrek is, stap hulle langs die kus af met die see aan hul linkerkant en die bos na regs. Met die uit- sondering van enkele seemeeue is dit 'n baie stil plek. Die woud is so dig en vol struikgewasse dat hulle skaars kan sien wat daarin aangaan en daar is niks wat roer nie — nie eens 'n voël of 'n gogga nie.

Skulpe en seewiere en anemone, of klein krappies in rotspele is alles

goed en wel, maar as jy dors is, word jy gou moeg van hulle. Na die koue water voel hul voete nou warm en swaar. Susan en Lucy het reënjasse wat hulle moet saamdra. Edmund het sy jas op die bank by die stasie neergesit net voor die toordery begin het en hy en Peter neem beurte om Peter se oorjas te dra.

Kort daarna begin die kus na regs swaai. Omtrent 'n kwartier later, nadat hulle 'n rotsige uitsteeksel oorge- steek het, wat tot diep in die see loop, swenk die kus weer skerp. Nou is hul rue gedraai op die deel van die see waarop hulle afgekom het toe hulle die eerste keer uit die bos gekom het, en voor hulle oor die water, sien hulle nog 'n kuslyn wat net so dig begroei is as die een wat hulle op die oomblik verken.

“Ek wonder of dit 'n eiland daar oorkant is, en of ons netnou daar sal uitkom?” sê Lucy.

“Weet nie,” sê Peter, en hulle stap in stilte verder.

Die strand waarlangs hulle loop, kom al nader en nader aan die oorkantste kuslyn, en elke keer dat hulle om 'n landpunt stap, verwag hulle dat die twee by mekaar gaan uitkom. Maar hulle word telkens teleurgestel. Hulle klouter by 'n paar hoë rotse op en van heel bo af kan hulle 'n goeie ent verder sien en — “Deksels!” sê Edmund. “Dit help nie. Ons gaan nooit by daardie oorkantste woude kom nie. Ons is op 'n eiland!”

Dit is waar. Op hierdie punt is die kanaal tussen hulle en die oorkantste kus maar net sowat dertig of veertig tree breed, en hulle kan nou sien dit is die smalste plek.

Van hier af swaai hul eie kus weer na regs en is daar oopsee tussen hulle en die vasteland. Dit is duidelik dat hulle reeds meer as halfpad om die eiland gestap het.

“Kyk!” sê Lucy skielik. “Wat is dit?” Sy wys na 'n lang, silwer slangagtige ding wat oor die strand kronkel.

“'n Stroompie! 'n Stroompie!” skree die ander en so moeg soos hulle is, skarrel hulle inderhaas teen die rotse af en laat vat na die vars water toe. Hulle weet die water verder weg van die strand af sal lekkerder smaak, dus gaan hulle dadelik na waar dit uit die bos kom. Die borne staan baie dig op mekaar, maar die stroom het 'n diep sloot tussen hoë mosbegroeide walle uitgekerf sodat 'n mens gebukkend deur 'n soort blaretonnel kan kruip. Hulle val op hul knieë langs die eerste bruin, rimpelende poel en drink en drink en drink en dompel hul gesigte in die water en steek hul arms tot by hul elmboë in.

“Reg,” sê Edmund, “nou vir daardie toebroodjies.”

“O, moet ons hulle nie liever vir later hou nie?” wil Susan weet. “Ons gaan hulle later dalk nog baie nodiger he.”

“Ek wens,” sê Lucy, “noudat ons nie meer dors is nie, kan ons nog steeds so niehonger voel soos toe ons nog dors was.”

“Maar wat van daardie toebroodjies?” herhaal Edmund. “Dit help nie ons hou hulle tot hulle sleg word nie. Julie moet onthou, dis hier baie warmer as in Engeland en ons dra hulle al ure in ons sakke saam.” Toe haal hulle die twee pakkies uit en verdeel dit in vier porsies, en nie- mand kry heeltemal genoeg nie, maar dis darem beter as niks. Hierna praat hulle oor wat hulle volgende keer gaan eet. Lucy wil terug see toe gaan om garnale te vang, tot iemand haar herinner dat hulle nie nette het nie. Edmund sê hulle moet seemeeu-eiers op die rotse bymekaar maak, maar toe hulle daarvoor begin nadink, kan hulle nie onthou of hulle enige seemeeu-eiers gesien het nie en as daar is, sal hulle dit in elk geval nie kan gaarmaak nie. Peter dink by homself dat tensy iets gebeur, hulle binnekort met graagte rou eiers sal eet, maar hy besluit om dit nie hardop te sê nie. Susan sê dis jammer hulle het die toebroodjies so gou geëet. Die humeure wil-wil kort raak en uiteindelik sê Edmund, “Hoor hier, daar’s net een ding wat ons kan doen. Ons moet die bos verken. Kluisenaars en swerfridders en mense soos hulle oorleef altyd op die een of ander manier as hulle in ’n woud is. Hulle soek wortels en bessies en goed.”

“Watter soort wortels?” vra Susan.

“Ek het nog altyd gedink boomwortels,” sê Lucy.

“Komaan,” sê Peter, “Ed is reg. Ons moet iets probeer doen. En dit sal beter wees as om weer in die felle son te wees.”

Hulle staan op en begin die stroom volg. Dit is baie harde werk. Hulle moet onderdeur party takke kruip en bo-oor ander klim. Hulle sukkel deur groot massas goed soos rododendrons en skeur hul klere en hul voete raak nat en nog steeds is daar nie ’n geluid nie, behalwe die geraas van die stroom en die geraas wat hulle maak. Hulle is net besig om goed moeg hiervoor te raak toe hulle skielik iets heerliks ruik en ’n helder spatsel kleur hoog bo hul koppe aan die bokant van die regterwal oplet.

“Haai!” roep Lucy uit. “Ek dink dis ’n appelboom.”

Dit is. Hulle klouter hyg-hyg teen die steil wal op, dwing ’n pad deur ’n klomp brame oop en bevind hulle onder ’n ou boom swaar gelaai is met groot goudgee appels wat so kraakvars en sappig is as wat jy maar kan droom.

“Dis nie die enigste boom nie,” sê Edmund met ’n mond vol appel. “Kyk daar - en daar.”

“Sowaar, daar is dosyne van hulle,” sê Susan terwyl sy haar eerste stronk weggooi en nog ’n appel pluk. “Dit moet ’n boord gewees het — lank, lank gelede voor die plek wild geword het, toe hier nog nie ’n bos was nie.” “Dan het hier vroeër mense op die eiland gewoon,” sê Peter.

“En wat is dit?” vra Lucy en wys na iets ’n entjie vorentoe.

“Dis sowaar ’n muur,” sê Peter, “’n Ou klipmuur.” Hulle druk ’n pad tussen die swaargelaaide takke oop tot hulle by die muur kom. Dit is baie oud en het plek- plek inmekaargetuimel; mos en randasters groei daaroor, maar dis amper so hoog as die hoogste bome. Toe hulle redelik naby daaraan is, sien hulle ’n hoë boog waarin daar voorheen ’n hek moet gewees het, maar waar die grootste van al die appelbome nou staan. Hulle moet van die takke afbreek om verby te kan kom en hierna knip- per almal hul oë, want die lig het skielik baie helder geword. Hulle bevind hul in ’n groot oop plek met mure reg rondom. Hier is geen bome nie, net gelyk gras en gousblomme en klimop en grys mure. Dit is ’n helder, stil, geheime plek en nogal somber ook. Al vier stap tot in die middel, te bly dat hulle regop kan staan en hul ledemate vryelik kan beweeg.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ANCIENT TREASURE HOUSE

“THIS WASN’T A GARDEN,” SAID SUSAN presently. “It was a castle and this must have been the courtyard.”

“I see what you mean,” said Peter. “Yes. That is the remains of a tower. And there is what used to be a flight of steps going up to the top of the walls. And look at those other steps—the broad, shallow ones—going up to that doorway. It must have been the door into the great hall.”

“Ages ago, by the look of it,” said Edmund.

“Yes, ages ago,” said Peter. “I wish we could find out who the people were that lived in this castle; and how long ago.”

“It gives me a queer feeling,” said Lucy.

“Does it, Lu?” said Peter, turning and looking hard at her. “Because it does the same to me. It is the queerest thing that has happened this queer day. I wonder where we are and what it all means?”

While they were talking they had crossed the courtyard and gone through the other doorway into what had once been the hall. This was now very like the courtyard, for the roof had long since disappeared and it was merely another space of grass and daisies, except that it was shorter and narrower and the walls were higher. Across the far end there was a kind of terrace about three feet higher than the rest.

“I wonder, was it really the hall,” said Susan. “What is that terrace kind of thing?”

“Why, you silly,” said Peter (who had become strangely excited), “don’t you see? That was the dais where the High Table was, where the King and the great lords sat. Anyone would think you had forgotten that we ourselves were once Kings and Queens and sat on a dais just like that, in our great hall.”

“In our castle of Cair Paravel,” continued Susan in a dreamy and rather singsong voice, “at the mouth of the great river of Narnia. How could I forget?”

“How it all comes back!” said Lucy. “We could pretend we were in Cair Paravel now. This hall

must have been very like the great hall we feasted in.”

“But unfortunately without the feast,” said Edmund. “It’s getting late, you know. Look how long the shadows are. And have you noticed that it isn’t so hot?”

“We shall need a camp-fire if we’ve got to spend the night here,” said Peter. “I’ve got matches. Let’s go and see if we can collect some dry wood.”

Everyone saw the sense of this, and for the next half-hour they were busy. The orchard through which they had first come into the ruins

turned out not to be a good place for firewood. They tried the other side of the castle, passing out of the hall by a little side door into a maze of stony humps and hollows which must once have been passages and smaller rooms but was now all nettles and wild roses. Beyond this they found a wide gap in the castle wall and stepped through it into a wood of darker and bigger trees where they found dead branches and rotten wood and sticks and dry leaves and fir-cones in plenty. They went to and fro with bundles until they had a good pile on the dais. At the fifth journey they found the well, just outside the hall, hidden in weeds, but clean and fresh and deep when they had cleared these away. The remains of a stone pavement ran half-way round it. Then the girls went out to pick some more apples and the boys built the fire, on the dais and fairly close to the corner between two walls, which they thought would be the snuggest and warmest place. They had great difficulty in lighting it and used a lot of matches, but they succeeded in the end. Finally, all four sat down with their backs to the wall and their faces to the fire. They tried roasting some of the apples on the ends of sticks. But roast apples are not much good without sugar, and they are too hot to eat with your fingers till they are too cold to be worth eating. So they had to content themselves with raw apples, which, as Edmund said, made one realize that school suppers weren't so bad after all—"I shouldn't mind a good thick slice of bread and margarine this minute," he added. But the spirit of adventure was rising in them all, and no one really wanted to be back at school.

Shortly after the last apple had been eaten, Susan went out to the well to get another drink. When she came back she was carrying something in her hand.

"Look," she said in a rather choking kind of voice. "I found it by the well." She handed it to Peter and sat down. The others thought she looked and sounded as if she might be going to cry. Edmund and Lucy eagerly bent forward to see what was in Peter's hand—a little, bright thing that gleamed in the firelight.

"Well, I'm—I'm jiggered," said Peter, and his voice also sounded queer. Then he handed it to the others.

All now saw what it was—a little chess-knight, ordinary in size but extraordinarily heavy because it was made of pure gold; and the eyes in the horse's head were two tiny little rubies—or rather one was, for the other had been knocked out.



"Why!" said Lucy, "it's exactly like one of the golden chessmen we used to play with when we were Kings and Queens at Cair Paravel."

"Cheer up, Su," said Peter to his other sister.

"I can't help it," said Susan. "It brought back—oh, such lovely times. And I remembered playing chess with fauns and good giants, and the mer-people singing in the sea, and my beautiful horse—and—and—"

"Now," said Peter in a quite different voice, "it's about time we four started using our brains."

"What about?" asked Edmund.

"Have none of you guessed where we are?" said Peter.

"Go on, go on," said Lucy. "I've felt for hours that there was some wonderful mystery hanging over this place."

"Fire ahead, Peter," said Edmund. "We're all listening."

"We are in the ruins of Cair Paravel itself," said Peter.

"But, I say," replied Edmund. "I mean, how do you make that out? This place has been ruined for ages. Look at all those big trees growing right up to the gates. Look at the very stones. Anyone can see that nobody has lived here for hundreds of years."

"I know," said Peter. "That is the difficulty. But let's leave that out for the moment. I want to take the points one by one. First point: this hall is exactly the same shape and size as the hall at Cair Paravel. Just picture a roof on this, and a colored pavement instead of grass, and tapestries on the walls, and you get our royal banqueting hall."

No one said anything.

"Second point," continued Peter. "The castle well is exactly where our well was, a little to the south of the great hall; and it is exactly the same size and shape."

Again there was no reply.

"Third point: Susan has just found one of our old chessmen—or something as like one of them as two peas."

Still nobody answered.

"Fourth point. Don't you remember—it was the very day before the ambassadors came from the King of Calormen—don't you remember planting the orchard outside the north gate of Cair Paravel? The greatest of all the wood-people, Pomona herself, came to put good spells on it. It was those very decent little chaps the moles who did the

actual digging. Can you have forgotten that funny old Lilygloves, the chief mole, leaning on his spade and saying, 'Believe me, your Majesty, you'll be glad of these fruit trees one day.' And by Jove he was right."

"I do! I do!" said Lucy, and clapped her hands.

"But look here, Peter," said Edmund. "This must be all rot. To begin with, we didn't plant the orchard slap up against the gate. We wouldn't have been such fools."

"No, of course not," said Peter. "But it has grown up to the gate since."

"And for another thing," said Edmund, "Cair Paravel wasn't on an island."

"Yes, I've been wondering about that. But it was a what-do-you-call-it, a peninsula. Jolly nearly an island. Couldn't it have been made an island since our time? Somebody has dug a channel."

"But half a moment!" said Edmund. "You keep on saying *since our time*. But it's only a year ago since we came back from Narnia. And you want to make out that in one year castles have fallen down, and great forests have grown up, and little trees we saw planted ourselves have turned into a big old orchard, and goodness knows what else. It's all impossible."

"There's one thing," said Lucy. "If this is Cair Paravel there ought to be a door at this end of the dais. In fact we ought to be sitting with our backs against it at this moment. You know—the door that led down to the treasure chamber."

"I suppose there *isn't* a door," said Peter, getting up.

The wall behind them was a mass of ivy.

"We can soon find out," said Edmund, taking up one of the sticks that they had laid ready for putting on the fire. He began beating the ivied wall. Tap-tap went the stick against the stone; and again, tap-tap; and then, all at once, boom-boom, with a quite different sound, a hollow, wooden sound.

"Great Scott!" said Edmund.

"We must clear this ivy away," said Peter.

"Oh, do let's leave it alone," said Susan. "We can try it in the morning. If we've got to spend the night here I don't want an open door at my back and a great big black hole that anything might come out of, besides the draft and the damp. And it'll soon be dark."

"Susan! How can you?" said Lucy with a reproachful glance. But both the boys were too much excited to take any notice of Susan's advice. They worked at the ivy with their hands and with Peter's pocket-knife till the knife broke. After that they used Edmund's. Soon the whole place where they had been sitting was covered with ivy; and at last they had the door cleared.

"Locked, of course," said Peter.

"But the wood's all rotten," said Edmund. "We can pull it to bits in no time, and it will make extra firewood. Come on."

It took them longer than they expected and, before they had done, the great hall had grown dusky and the first star or two had come out overhead. Susan was not the only one who felt a slight shudder as the boys stood above the pile of splintered wood, rubbing the dirt off their hands and staring into the cold, dark opening they had made.

"Now for a torch," said Peter.

"Oh, what *is* the good?" said Susan. "And as Edmund said—"

"I'm not saying it now," Edmund interrupted. "I still don't understand, but we can settle that later. I suppose you're coming down, Peter?"

"We must," said Peter. "Cheer up, Susan. It's no good behaving like kids now that we are back in Narnia. You're a Queen here. And anyway no one could go to sleep with a mystery like this on their minds."



They tried to use long sticks as torches but this was not a success. If you held them with the lighted end up they went out, and if you held them the other way they scorched your hand and the smoke got in your eyes. In the end they had to use Edmund's electric torch; luckily it had been a birthday present less than a week ago and the battery was almost new. He went first, with the light. Then came Lucy, then Susan, and Peter brought up the rear.

"I've come to the top of the steps," said Edmund.

"Count them," said Peter.

"One—two—three," said Edmund, as he went cautiously down, and so up to sixteen. "And this is the bottom," he shouted back.

"Then it really must be Cair Paravel," said Lucy. "There were sixteen." Nothing more was said till all four were standing in a knot together at the foot of the stairway. Then Edmund flashed his torch slowly round.

"?—o—o—oh!!" said all the children at once.

For now all knew that it was indeed the ancient treasure chamber of Cair Paravel where they had once reigned as Kings and Queens of

Narnia. There was a kind of path up the middle (as it might be in a greenhouse), and along each side at intervals stood rich suits of armor, like knights guarding the treasures. In between the suits of armor, and on each side of the path, were shelves covered with precious things—necklaces and arm rings and finger rings and golden bowls and dishes and long tusks of ivory, brooches and coronets and chains of gold, and heaps of unset stones lying piled anyhow as if they were marbles or potatoes—diamonds, rubies, carbuncles, emeralds, topazes, and amethysts. Under the shelves stood great chests of oak strengthened with iron bars and heavily padlocked. And it was bitterly cold, and so still that they could hear themselves breathing, and the treasures were so covered with dust that unless they had realized where they were and remembered most of the things, they would hardly have known they were treasures. There was something sad and a little frightening about the place, because it all seemed so forsaken and long ago. That was why nobody said anything for at least a minute.

Then, of course, they began walking about and picking things up to look at. It was like meeting very old friends. If you had been there you would have heard them saying things like, “Oh look! Our coronation rings—do you remember first wearing this?—Why, this is the little brooch we all thought was lost—I say, isn’t that the armor you wore in the great tournament in the Lone Islands?—do you remember the dwarf making that for me?—do you remember drinking out of that horn?—do you remember, do you remember?”

But suddenly Edmund said, “Look here. We mustn’t waste the battery: goodness knows how often we shall need it. Hadn’t we better take what we want and get out again?”

“We must take the gifts,” said Peter. For long ago at a Christmas in Narnia he and Susan and Lucy had been given certain presents which they valued more than their whole kingdom. Edmund had had no gift because he was not with them at the time. (This was his own fault, and you can read about it in the other book.)

They all agreed with Peter and walked up the path to the wall at the far end of the treasure chamber, and there, sure enough, the gifts were still hanging. Lucy’s was the smallest for it was only a little bottle. But the bottle was made of diamond instead of glass, and it was still more than half full of the magical cordial which would heal almost every wound and every illness. Lucy said nothing and looked very solemn as she took her gift down from its place and slung the belt over her shoulder and once more felt the bottle at her side where it used to hang in the old days. Susan’s gift had been a bow and arrows and a horn. The bow was still there, and the ivory quiver, full of well-feathered arrows, but—Oh, Susan,” said Lucy. “Where’s the horn?”

"Oh bother, bother, bother," said Susan after she had thought for a moment. "I remember now. I took it with me the last day of all, the day we went hunting the White Stag. It must have got lost when we blundered back into that other place—England, I mean."

Edmund whistled. It was indeed a shattering loss; for this was an enchanted horn and, whenever you blew it, help was certain to come to you, wherever you were.

"Just the sort of thing that might come in handy in a place like this," said Edmund.

"Never mind," said Susan, "I've still got the bow." And she took it.

"Won't the string be perished, Su?" said Peter.

But whether by some magic in the air of the treasure chamber or not, the bow was still in working order. Archery and swimming were the things Susan was good at. In a moment she had bent the bow and then she gave one little pluck to the string. It twanged: a chirruping twang that vibrated through the whole room. And that one small noise brought back the old days to the children's minds more than anything that had happened yet. All the battles and hunts and feasts came rushing into their heads together.



Then she unstrung the bow again and slung the quiver at her side.

Next, Peter took down his gift—the shield with the great red lion on it, and the royal sword. He blew, and rapped them on the floor, to get off the dust. He fitted the shield on his arm and slung the sword by his side. He was afraid at first that it might be rusty and stick to the sheath. But it was not so. With one swift motion he drew it and held it up, shining in the torchlight.

"It is my sword Rhindon," he said; "with it I killed the Wolf." There was a new tone in his voice, and the others all felt that he was really

Peter the High King again. Then, after a little pause, everyone remembered that they must save the battery.

They climbed the stair again and made up a good fire and lay down close together for warmth. The ground was very hard and uncomfortable, but they fell asleep in the end.

Hoofstuk 2

Die oeroue skathuis



"Dit was nie 'n tuin nie," sê Susan 'n rukkie later.

"Dit was 'n kasteel en dit moet die binnehof gewees het."

"Ek sien wat jy bedoel," sê Peter. "Ja. Daar is die oor- blyfsels van 'n toring. En daardie was vroeër 'n stel trappe wat tot bo-op die mure gelei het. En kyk daardie ander trappe - die breë, vlakkes - wat na daardie ingang gaan. Dit moet die deur na die groot saal gewees het." "Eeue gelede, of so lyk dit," sê Edmund.

"Ja, eeue gelede," beaam Peter. "Ek wens ons kon weet wie het in hierdie kasteel gewoon, en hoe lank gelede." "Dit laat my snaaks voel," sê Lucy.

"Regtig, Lu?" vra Peter. Hy draai om en kyk deur- dringend na haar. "Want dit laat my ook so voel. Dis die snaaksste ding wat nog op hierdie snaakse dag gebeur het. Ek wonder waar ons is en wat dit alles beteken?" Terwyl hulle praat, beweeg hulle oor die binnehof en deur die oorkantste ingang en stap in by wat vroeër die saal was. Dit lyk nou feitlik net soos die binnehof, want die dak is lank reeds weg en dis maar net nog 'n area vol gras en gousblomme, behalwe dat dit korter en smaller is en hoër mure het. Aan die verste kant is daar 'n soort terras wat ongeveer drie voet hoër as die res is.

"Ek wonder of dit regtig die saal was?" sê Susan. "Wat is daardie terrasserige ding?"

"Ag, bobbejaan," sê Peter (wat besig is om vreemd opgewonde te word), "kan jy nie sien nie? Dis die platform vir die hoof tafel waarby die koning en die groot lords gesit het. Enigeen sal dink jy't vergeet ons was ook al konings en koninginne wat in ons eie groot saal op 'n platform net soos hierdie een gesit het."

"In ons kasteel by Kair Paravel," gaan Susan in 'n dromerige sangstem voort, "by die mond van Narnia se groot rivier. Hoe sal ek dit ooit vergeet?"

"Snaaks hoe alles terugkom!" sê Lucy. "Ons kan maak asof ons nou in Kair Paravel is. Hierdie saal was seker baie soos die groot saal waarin ons

feesgevier het.”

“Ons sal ongelukkig van die fees moet vergeet,” sê Edmund. “Dit raak laat, weet julle. Kyk hoe lank is die skaduwees. En het julle agtergekom dis nie meer so warm nie?”

“Ons sal ’n kampvuur moet maak as ons die nag hier gaan deurbring,” sê Peter. “Ek het vuurhoutjies. Kom ons gaan kyk of ons droë hout in die hande kan kry.”

Dit maak vir almal sin en die volgende halfuur is hulle druk besig. Die boord waardeur hulle na die murasie gekom het, is nie ’n goeie plek vir vuurmaakhout nie. Hulle probeer die ander kant van die kasteel en gaan deur ’n klein deurtjie uit die saal na ’n doolhof klipperige hompe en holtes wat vroeër gange en kleiner vertrekke moet gewees het, maar nou die ene netels en wilde rose is. Hulle kom op ’n groot gat in die kasteel se muur af en toe hulle hierdeur gaan, bevind hulle hul in ’n woud vol groot, donker bome waar daar baie dooie takke en verrotte hout en stokke en droë blare en dennebolle rondlê. Hulle loop heen en weer met bondels tot daar ’n lekker hoop op die platform is. Die vyfde keer kry hulle die put, net buitekant die saal, halfversteek onder on- kruid, maar toe hulle dit opgeruim het, sien hulle die put is skoon en vars en diep. Daar is reste van ’n klipplaveisel halfpad om die put. Die meisies gaan pluk nog appels en die seuns bou ’n vuur op die platform, redelik naby die hoek tussen twee mure wat na hul mening die mees be- skutte en warmste plek sal wees. Hulle sukkel om die vuur aan te steek en gebruik baie vuurhoutjies, maar kry dit op die ou end tog reg. Uiteindelik gaan sit al vier met hul rue teen die muur en hul gesigte na die vuur. Hulle probeer om ’n paar appels aan stokke te rooster. Maar geroosterde appels is nie lekker sonder suiker nie — en dis eers te warm om met jou vingers te eet en dan weer te koud. Dus moet hulle maar tevrede wees met rou appels wat, soos Edmund sê, ’n mens laat besef dat skool- etes per slot van rekening nie so sleg is nie. “Op hierdie oomblik sal ek glad nie omgee vir ’n dik sny brood met margarien nie,” voeg hy by. Maar die gees van avontuur is besig om by hulle pos te vat en niemand wil regtig terug by die skool wees nie. Kort na die laaste appel geëet is, gaan Susan uit put toe vir ’n slukkie water. Toe sy terugkom, hou sy iets in haar hand vas.

“Kyk,” sê sy in ’n gesmoorde stem. “Ek het dit by die put gekry.” Sy gee dit vir Peter en gaan sit. Die ander dink sy lyk en klink asof sy wil huil. Edmund en Lucy buk nuuskierig oor om te sien wat in Peter se hand is - ’n klein, blink voorwerp wat in die vuur se lig glinster.

“Ek - ek glo dit nie,” sê Peter en sy stem klink ook vreemd. Toe gee hy dit vir die ander.

En nou sien almal wat dit is - 'n klein skaakridder, die gewone grootte, maar besonder swaar, want dis van suiwel goud gemaak. Die perd se oë is twee klein robyntjies - of liever, een is, want die ander een het uitgeval.

“Haai!” sê Lucy. “Dit lyk net soos een van die goue skaakmannetjies waarmee ons gespeel het toe ons konings en koninginne in Kair Paravel was.”

“Ruk jou reg, Su,” sê Peter vir sy ander suster.

“Ek kan dit nie help nie,” sê Susan. “Dit bring alles terug - o, daardie wonderlike tye. Ek onthou hoe ons met die faune en die goeie reuse skaak gespeel het en die meermense wat in die see sing en my pragtige perd - en — en -

“Luister,” sê Peter in 'n heel ander stem, “dis nou tyd dat ons vier ons verstand begin gebruik.”

“Waaroor?” vra Edmund.

“Kon niemand van julle nog raai waar ons is nie?” vra Peter.

“Gaan aan, gaan aan,” sê Lucy. “Ek voel al vir ure daar is die een of ander wonderlike geheim aan dié plek.”

“Praat, Peter,” sê Edmund. “Ons luister.”

“Ons is in Kair Paravel se ruïnes,” sê Peter.

“Ag nee wat,” antwoord Edmund. “Ek bedoel, waar kom jy daaraan? Hierdie plek is al vir eeue 'n puinhoop. Kyk na daardie groot bome wat tot by die hek staan. Kyk na hierdie klippe. Enigeen kan sien hier het vir honderde jare niemand gewoon nie.”

“Ek weet,” sê Peter. “Dis die probleem. Maar kom ons vergeet vir die oomblik daarvan. Ek wil die moontlikhede een vir een bekijk. Eerstens: hierdie saal is presies dieselfde vorm en grootte as die saal by Kair Paravel. Verbeel julle daar's 'n dak en kleurvolle plaveisel pleks van gras, en behangsels teen die mure — en siedaar, dis ons koninklike banketsaal!”

Niemand sê iets nie.

“Tweedens,” gaan Peter voort. “Die kasteel se put is op die presiese plek waar ons put was, effens suid van die groot saal — en dis presies dieselfde vorm en grootte. Weer is daar geen antwoord nie.

“Derdens: Susan het een van ons ou skaakmannetjies gekry - of iets wat op 'n haar so lyk.”

Nog steeds antwoord niemand nie.

“Vierdens: onthou julle nie - dit was die presiese dag net voor die koning van Kalormen se ambassadeurs hier aangekom het — onthou julle nie toe die boord voor Kair Paravel se noordelike hek aangeplant is nie? Die grootste van al die woudwesens, Pomona, het nog self goeie towerspreuke daaroor

uitgespreek en dit was daardie ein- ste gawe kêreltjies, die molle, wat die graafwerk gedoen het. Het julle daai snaakse ou Leliehandjies, die hoofmol, dan vergeet? Hy het op sy graaf geleun en gesê, ‘Glo my, u Majesteit, eendag sal jy nog bly wees oor hierdie vrugtebome.’ En sowaar, hy was reg.”

“Ek onthou! Ek onthou!” sê Lucy en klap haar hande.

“Maar hoor hier, Peter,” sê Edmund. “Dis sommer alles bog. Om mee te begin, ons het die boord nie tot styf teen die hek geplant nie. Ons sou mos nie so dom gewees het nie.”

“Nee, natuurlik nie,” antwoord Peter. “Maar dit het in- tussen tot teen die hek gegroei.”

“En nog iets,” sê Edmund. “Kair Paravel was nie op ’n eiland nie.”

“Ja, ek wonder nog die hele tyd daaroor. Maar dit was ’n wat-nou-weer, ’n skiereiland. So te sê ’n eiland. Kon dit nie intussen ’n eiland geword het nie? Dalk het ie- mand ’n kanaal gegrawe.”

“Wag ’n bietjie!” roep Edmund uit. “Jy sê aanmekaar *intussen*. Maar ons het net ’n jaar gelede van Narnia af (eruggekom. En jy probeer nou maak asof kastele ruïnes geword het, asof groot woude gegroei en klein boompies wat ons self geplant het in ’n groot ou boord verander bet en wie weet wat nog alles. Alles in ’n jaar? Dis on- moontlik.”

“Een ding is seker,” sê Lucy. “As dit Kair Paravel is, moet daar ’n deur aan hierdie kant van die platform wees. Om die waarheid te sê, ons sit seker op die oomblik met ons rue daarteen. Julie weet - die deur na die skatkamer.”

“Ek dink nie hier is ’n deur nie,” sê Peter en staan op.

Die muur agter hulle is ’n massa klimop.

“Ons sal gou genoeg weet,” sê Edmund en tel een van die stokke op wat hulle reghou om op die vuur te gooi. Hy begin om teen die klimopbegroeide muur te slaan. Tik-tik gaan die stok teen die klip en weer tik-tik en toe, skielik, boem-boem. ’n Heel ander klank, ’n hoi houtagtige geluid.

“Wraggies!” sê Edmund.

“Ons moet die klimop aftrek,” sê Peter.

“Ag, los dit,” sê Susan. “Ons kan móreoggend probeer. As ons die nag hier moet deurbring, wil ek dit doen son- der ’n oop deur agter my rug met ’n groot swart gat waaruit enigiets kan kom, om nie te praat van die koue en klammigheid nie. Dis al amper donker.”

“Susan! Hoe kan jy?” sê Lucy en kyk verwytend na haar. Maar die twee seuns is heeltemal te opgewonde om hulle aan Susan se raad te steur. Hulle takel die klimop met hul hande en met Peter se sakmes, tot die lem breek. Daarna gebruik hulle Edmund s’n. Kort voor lank is die hele plek waar hulle gesit het die ene klimop; en uitein- delik kan hulle die deur sien.

"Gesluit, natuurlik," sê Peter.

"Maar die hout is vrot," sê Edmund. "Ons kan dit gou- gou afbreek, en dan het ons ekstra vuurmaakhout. Kom- aan."

Dit neem langer as wat hulle verwag het, en voor hulle klaar is, is die groot saal al donker en het die eerste paar sterre bo hul koppe uitgekom. Susan is nie die enig- ste een wat liggies ril toe die seuns langs die stapel versplinterde hout staan terwyl hulle hul hande afvee en na die koue donker opening staar nie.

"Nou vir 'n fakkel," sê Peter.

"Ag, wat sal dit tog help?" keer Susan. "En soos Edmund gesê het —"

"Ek sê dit nie nou meer nie," val Edmund haar in die rede. "Ek verstaan nog steeds nie so lekker wat aangaan nie, maar ons kan later daaroor praat. Jy kom seker saam af ondertoe, of hoe, Peter?"

"Ons sal moet," sê Peter. "Komaan, Susan. Dit help nie om soos kinders aan te gaan noudat ons terug in Narnia is nie. Hier is jy 'n koningin. En in elk geval, wie kan gaan slaap met so 'n geheim wat by hom spook?"

Hulle probeer om lang stokke vir fakkels te gebruik, maar dit werk nie. As jy hulle met die brandende punt na bo hou, gaan hulle dood en as jy hulle omdraai, brand jy jou hand en kom die rook in jou oë. Op die ou end moet hulle Edmund se elektriese flits gebruik. Gelukkig was dit minder as 'n week gelede 'n verjaardagsgeskenk en die batterye is nog amper nuut. Hy loop voor met die lig. Dan kom Lucy, dan Susan en laastens Peter.

"Ek is nou aan die bopunt van die trappe," sê Edmund.

"Tel hulle," sê Peter.

"Een — twee — drie," sê Edmund terwyl hy versigtig ondertoe gaan. Hy tel tot by sestion. "Ek is nou onder!" skree hy na bo.

"Dan moet dit sowaar Kair Paravel wees," sê Lucy. "Daar was sestion." Hulle sê niks verder tot al vier saam- gebondel aan die voet van die trappe staan nie. Toe lig Edmund stadig met sy flits rond.

"O — o — o — o!!" sê almal tesame.

Want nou weet hulle dit is inderdaad die oeroue skat- kamer van Kair Paravel waar hulle vroeër as konings en koninginne van Narnia geheers het. Daar is 'n soort paadjie in die middel (soos in 'n kweekhuis) en aan weerskante staan pantsertroepbeelde wat die skatte soos ridders oppas. Tussen die pantsertroepbeelde aan die kant van die paadjie is rakke vol kosbaarhede - halssnoere en armbande en ringe en goue bakke en skottels en lang ivoortande, borsspelde en krone en goue kettings en hopies ongesette stene wat oral rondlê asof dit albasters of aartappels is - diamante, robyne, rooi edelstene, smaragde, topase en ametisse. Onder die rakke staan groot

eikehoutkiste versterk met ysterstawe en gesluit met swaar slotte. Dit is bitter koud en so stil dat hulle hulself kan hoor asemhaal. Die skatte is so vol stof dat as hulle nie geweet het waar hulle hul bevind en wat die meeste van die goed is nie, hulle skaars sou weet dat dit skatte is. Daar is iets hartseers en effens skrikwekkends aan die plek wat so verlate en oud lyk. Dit is hoekom nie-mand vir ten minste 'n minuut iets sê nie.

Toe begin hulle natuurlik rondloop en goed optel en daarna kyk. Dis soos wanneer jy ou vriende na 'n lang tyd weer raakloop. As jy daar was, sou jy hulle goed hoor sê het soos, "O kyk, ons kroningsringe! - Onthou julle toe ons hulle die eerste keer gedra het? — Haai, dis die borsspeldjie wat ons almal gedink het weg is - Is dit nie die wapenrusting wat ons tydens die groot toernooi by die Eilande van Verlatenheid gedra het nie? — Onthou julle die dwerg wat dit vir my gemaak het? - Onthou julle hoe ons uit daardie horing gedrink het? — Onthou julle, onthou julle?"

Maar skielik sê Edmund, "Kyk, ons moenie die battery mors nie; nugter weet hoe baie ons dit nog gaan nodig kry. Moet ons nie liever vat wat ons wil hê en maak dat ons hier uitkom nie?"

"Ons moet die geskenke neem," sê Peter. Want lank gelede het hy en Susan en Lucy Kersgeskenke in Narnia gekry wat vir hulle kosbaarder as die hele koninkryk was. Edmund het niks gekry nie, want hy was nie daar nie. (Dit was sy eie skuld, en jy kan in 'n ander boek daaroor lees.)

Hulle stem almal saam met Peter en stap op met die paadjie na die skatkamer se verste muur, en sowaar, daar hang die geskenke nog steeds. Lucy s'n is die kleinste, want dis net 'n klein botteltjie. Maar die bottel is van diamante gemaak en nie van glas nie en dis nog steeds meer as halfvol met 'n towerdrankie wat amper elke wond en siekte kan genees. Lucy sê niks en lyk baie somber toe sy haar geskenk van sy plek afhaal en die band oor haar skouer gooi en weer die bottel aan haar sy voel waar dit in die ou dae gehang het. Susan se geskenk was 'n pyl en boog en 'n horing. Die boog is nog daar en die ivoorkoker is vol pyle met goeie vere, maar — "O Susan," sê Lucy. "Waar's die horing?"

"Ag nee, nee, nee," sê Susan nadat sy 'n rukkie gedink het. "Nou onthou ek. Ek het dit op die heel laaste dag saamgeneem, die dag toe ons die wit hert gaan jag het.

Dit moet weggeraak het toe ons terug is na daardie ander plek - ek bedoel, Engeland."

Edmund fluit. Dit is inderdaad 'n groot verlies, want dis 'n betowerde horing en as jy daarop blaas, kan jy verseker wees dat hulp gaan opdaag, waar jy ook al mag wees.

“Net die soort ding wat ’n mens in ’n plek soos dié nodig het,” sê Edmund.

“Ag, nou ja,” sê Susan, “ek het darem nog die boog.” Sy tel dit op.

“Het die snaar nie vrot geword nie, Su?” wil Peter weet.

Maar of dit nou toorkrag in die skatkamer se lug is of nie, die boog is in ’n goeie werkende toestand. Boogskiet en swem is twee dinge waarmee Susan goed is. In ’n oog- wenk het sy die boog gebuig en die snaar ’n skerp plukkie gegee. Dit tweng: ’n skril tweng wat deur die hele vertrek vibreer. En daardie een klein geluidjie bring die ou dae terug in hul gedagtes, beter as enigiets anders wat tot dusver gebeur het. Al die oorloë en jagtogte en feeste flits gelyk deur almal se koppe.

Toe laat verslap sy die boog weer en hang die koker aan haar sy.

Hierna haal Peter sy geskenk af - die skild met die groot rooi leeu en die koninklike swaard. Hy blaas daarop en stamp dit op die grond om die stof af te kry. Hy steek sy arm deur die skild en hang die swaard aan sy sy. Eers is hy bang dat dit geroes is en in die skede sal vassteek, maar dit is nie die geval nie. Met een vinnige beweging trek hy die swaard uit en hou dit op sodat dit in die flitslig skitter.

“Dit is my swaard, Rhindon,” sê hy, “waarmee ek die wolf doodgemaak het.” Daar is ’n nuwe klank in sy stem en dit voel vir die ander asof hy regtig weer Peter die hoofkoning is. Toe, na ’n kort stilte, onthou almal dat hulle die battery moet spaar.

Weer klim hulle by die trappe op en maak ’n groot vuur en gaan lê styf teen mekaar om warm te bly. Die grond is baie hard en ongemaklik, maar op die ou end raak almal tog aan die slaap.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DWARF

THE WORST OF SLEEPING OUT OF DOORS is that you wake up so dreadfully early. And when you wake you have to get up because the ground is so hard that you are uncomfortable. And it makes matters worse if there is nothing but apples for breakfast and you have had nothing but apples for supper the night before. When Lucy had said—truly enough—that it was a glorious morning, there did not seem to be anything else nice to be said. Edmund said what everyone was feeling, “We’ve simply got to get off this island.”

When they had drunk from the well and splashed their faces they all went down the stream again to the shore and stared at the channel which divided them from the mainland.

“We’ll have to swim,” said Edmund.

“It would be all right for Su,” said Peter (Susan had won prizes for swimming at school). “But I don’t know about the rest of us.” By “the rest of us” he really meant Edmund who couldn’t yet do two lengths at the school baths, and Lucy, who could hardly swim at all.

“Anyway,” said Susan, “there may be currents. Father says it’s never wise to bathe in a place you don’t know.”

“But, Peter,” said Lucy, “look here. I know I can’t swim for nuts at home—in England, I mean. But couldn’t we all swim long ago—if it was long ago—when we were Kings and Queens in Narnia? We could ride then too, and do all sorts of things. Don’t you think—”

“Ah, but we were sort of grown-up then,” said Peter. “We reigned for years and years and learned to do things. Aren’t we just back at our proper ages again now?”

“Oh!” said Edmund in a voice which made everyone stop talking and listen to him.

“I’ve just seen it all,” he said.

“Seen what?” asked Peter.

“Why, the whole thing,” said Edmund. “You know what we were puzzling about last night, that it was only a year ago since we left Narnia but everything looks as if no one had lived in Cair Paravel for hundreds of years? Well, don’t you see? You know that, however long we seemed to have lived in Narnia, when we got back through the wardrobe it seemed to have taken no time at all?”

“Go on,” said Susan. “I think I’m beginning to understand.”

“And that means,” continued Edmund, “that, once you’re out of Narnia, you have no idea how Narnian time is going. Why shouldn’t hundreds of years have gone past in Narnia while only one year has passed for us in England?”

“By Jove, Ed,” said Peter. “I believe you’ve got it. In that sense it

really was hundreds of years ago that we lived in Cair Paravel. And now we're coming back to Narnia just as if we were Crusaders or Anglo-Saxons or Ancient Britons or someone coming back to modern England!"

"How excited they'll be to see us—" began Lucy, but at the same moment everyone else said, "Hush!" or "Look!" For now something was happening.

There was a wooded point on the mainland a little to their right, and they all felt sure that just beyond that point must be the mouth of the river. And now, round that point there came into sight a boat. When it had cleared the point, it turned and began coming along the channel toward them. There were two people on board, one rowing, the other sitting in the stern and holding a bundle that twitched and moved as if it were alive. Both these people seemed to be soldiers. They had steel caps on their heads and light shirts of chain-mail. Their faces were bearded and hard. The children drew back from the beach into the wood and watched without moving a finger.

"This'll do," said the soldier in the stern when the boat had come about opposite to them.

"What about tying a stone to his feet, Corporal?" said the other, resting on his oars.

"Garn!" growled the other. "We don't need that, and we haven't brought one. He'll drown sure enough without a stone, as long as we've tied the cords right." With these words he rose and lifted his bundle. Peter now saw that it was really alive and was in fact a Dwarf, bound hand and foot but struggling as hard as he could. Next moment he heard a twang just beside his ear, and all at once the soldier threw up his arms, dropping the Dwarf into the bottom of the boat, and fell over into the water. He floundered away to the far bank and Peter knew that Susan's arrow had struck on his helmet. He turned and saw that she was very pale but was already fitting a second arrow to the string. But it was never used. As soon as he saw his companion fall, the other soldier, with a loud cry, jumped out of the boat on the far side, and he also floundered through the water (which was apparently just in his depth) and disappeared into the woods of the mainland.



"Quick! Before she drifts!" shouted Peter. He and Susan, fully dressed as they were, plunged in, and before the water was up to their shoulders their hands were on the side of the boat. In a few seconds

they had hauled her to the bank and lifted the Dwarf out, and Edmund was busily engaged in cutting his bonds with the pocket-knife. (Peter's sword would have been sharper, but a sword is very inconvenient for this sort of work because you can't hold it anywhere lower than the hilt.) When at last the Dwarf was free, he sat up, rubbed his arms and legs, and exclaimed:



"Well, whatever they say, you don't *feel* like ghosts."

Like most Dwarfs he was very stocky and deep-chested. He would have been about three feet high if he had been standing up, and an immense beard and whiskers of coarse red hair left little of his face to be seen except a beak-like nose and twinkling black eyes.

"Anyway," he continued, "ghosts or not, you've saved my life and I'm extremely obliged to you."

"But why should we be ghosts?" asked Lucy.

"I've been told all my life," said the Dwarf, "that these woods along the shore were as full of ghosts as they were of trees. That's what the story is. And that's why, when they want to get rid of anyone, they usually bring him down here (like they were doing with me) and say they'll leave him to the ghosts. But I always wondered if they didn't really drown 'em or cut their throats. I never quite believed in the ghosts. But those two cowards you've just shot believed all right. They were more frightened of taking me to my death than I was of going!"

"Oh," said Susan. "So that's why they both ran away."

"Eh? What's that?" said the Dwarf.

"They got away," said Edmund. "To the mainland."

"I wasn't shooting to kill, you know," said Susan. She would not have liked anyone to think she could miss at such a short range.

"Hm," said the Dwarf. "That's not so good. That may mean trouble later on. Unless they hold their tongues for their own sake."

"What were they going to drown you for?" asked Peter.

"Oh, I'm a dangerous criminal, I am," said the Dwarf cheerfully. "But that's a long story. Meantime, I was wondering if perhaps you were going to ask me to breakfast? You've no idea what an appetite it gives one, being executed."

"There's only apples," said Lucy dolefully.

"Better than nothing, but not so good as fresh fish," said the Dwarf. "It looks as if I'll have to ask you to breakfast instead. I saw some fishing tackle in that boat. And anyway, we must take her round to the

other side of the island. We don't want anyone from the mainland coming down and seeing her."

"I ought to have thought of that myself," said Peter.

The four children and the Dwarf went down to the water's edge, pushed off the boat with some difficulty, and scrambled aboard. The Dwarf at once took charge. The oars were of course too big for him to use, so Peter rowed and the Dwarf steered them north along the channel and presently eastward round the tip of the island. From here the children could see right up the river, and all the bays and headlands of the coast beyond it. They thought they could recognize bits of it, but the woods, which had grown up since their time, made everything look very different.

When they had come round into open sea on the east of the island, the Dwarf took to fishing. They had an excellent catch of pavenders, a beautiful rainbow-colored fish which they all remembered eating in Cair Paravel in the old days. When they had caught enough they ran the boat up into a little creek and moored her to a tree. The Dwarf, who was a most capable person (and, indeed, though one meets bad Dwarfs, I never heard of a Dwarf who was a fool), cut the fish open, cleaned them, and said:

"Now, what we want next is some firewood."



"We've got some up at the castle," said Edmund.

The Dwarf gave a low whistle. "Beards and bedsteads!" he said. "So there really is a castle, after all?"

"It's only a ruin," said Lucy.

The Dwarf stared round at all four of them with a very curious expression on his face. "And who on earth—?" he began, but then broke off and said, "No matter. Breakfast first. But one thing before we go on. Can you lay your hand on your hearts and tell me I'm really alive? Are you sure I wasn't drowned and we're not all ghosts together?"

When they had all reassured him, the next question was how to carry the fish. They had nothing to string them on and no basket. They had to use Edmund's hat in the end because no one else had a hat. He would have made much more fuss about this if he had not by now been so ravenously hungry.

At first the Dwarf did not seem very comfortable in the castle. He

kept looking round and sniffing and saying, "H'm. Looks a bit spooky after all. Smells like ghosts, too." But he cheered up when it came to lighting the fire and showing them how to roast the fresh pavenders in the embers. Eating hot fish with no forks, and one pocket-knife between five people, is a messy business and there were several burnt fingers before the meal was ended; but, as it was now nine o'clock and they had been up since five, nobody minded the burns so much as you might have expected. When everyone had finished off with a drink from the well and an apple or so, the Dwarf produced a pipe about the size of his own arm, filled it, lit it, blew a great cloud of fragrant smoke, and said, "Now."

"You tell us your story first," said Peter. "And then we'll tell you ours."

"Well," said the Dwarf, "as you've saved my life it is only fair you should have your own way. But I hardly know where to begin. First of all I'm a messenger of King Caspian's."

"Who's he?" asked four voices all at once.

"Caspian the Tenth, King of Narnia, and long may he reign!" answered the Dwarf. "That is to say, he ought to be King of Narnia and we hope he will be. At present he is only King of us Old Narnians—"

"What do you mean by *old* Narnians, please?" asked Lucy.

"Why, that's us," said the Dwarf. "We're a kind of rebellion, I suppose."

"I see," said Peter. "And Caspian is the chief Old Narnian."

"Well, in a manner of speaking," said the Dwarf, scratching his head. "But he's really a New Narnian himself, a Telmarine, if you follow me."

"I don't," said Edmund.

"It's worse than the Wars of the Roses," said Lucy.

"Oh dear," said the Dwarf. "I'm doing this very badly. Look here: I think I'll have to go right back to the beginning and tell you how Caspian grew up in his uncle's court and how he comes to be on our side at all. But it'll be a long story."

"All the better," said Lucy. "We love stories."

So the Dwarf settled down and told his tale. I shall not give it to you in his words, putting in all the children's questions and interruptions, because it would take too long and be confusing, and, even so, it would leave out some points that the children only heard later. But the gist of the story, as they knew it in the end, was as follows.



Die ergste van buite slaap, is dat 'n mens so ontset- tend vroeg wakker word. En wanneer jy wakker is, moet jy opstaan, want die grond is so hard dat jy onge- maklik voel. En om sake te vererger, is daar niks anders as appels vir ontbyt nie en het jy die vorige aand ook niks behalwe appels vir aandete gehad nie. Na Lucy heel- temal tereg gesê het dat dit 'n pragtige dag is, is daar niks goeds oor om te sê nie. Edmund verwoord almal se gedagtes, “Ons moet net van hierdie eiland af kom.” Nadat almal by die put gedrink en hul gesigte gewas het, gaan hulle weer met die stroom af kus toe en staar na die kanaal wat hulle van die vasteland skei.

“Ons sal moet swem,” sê Edmund.

“Dis alles goed en wel vir Su,” sê Peter (Susan het by die skool pryse vir swem verower). “Maar ek weet nie van die res van ons nie.” Met “die res van ons” bedoel hy eintlik Edmund, wat nog nie twee lengtes in die skool se swembad kan baasraak nie en Lucy, wat nog skaars kan swem.

“In elk geval,” sê Susan, “daar kan seestrome wees. Pa sê altyd dis nie 'n goeie ding om te swem op 'n plek wat jy nie ken nie.”

“Luister, Peter,” sê Lucy, “ek weet ek kan nie swem om my lewe te red by die huis nie. Maar ons kon almal lank gelede swem — as dit lank gelede is — toe ons ko-

nings en koninginne in Narnia was. Ons kon perdry ook, en allerhande soort goed. Dink jy nie - ?”

“O, maar toe was ons soort van grootmense,” sê Peter. “Ons het vir jare en jare geheers en allerhande dinge leer doen. Maar nou is ons net ons gewone ouderdomme.” “A!” sê Edmund in 'n stem wat veroorsaak dat almal ophou praat en na hom luister. “Nou weet ek skielik,” sê hy.

“Wat weet jy?” vra Peter.

“Hoe alles werk,” sê Edmund. “Julie weet toe ons laas nag oor alles gewonder het: hoe dit net 'n jaar kan wees vandat ons uit Narnia weg is, terwyl alles lyk asof nie- mand vir honderde jare in Kair Paravel gewoon het nie? Wel, sien julle nie wat ek bedoel nie? Elke keer dat ons terug deur die hangkas gegaan het, het dit gevoel asof daar niks tyd verbygegaan het nie, maak nie saak hoe lank ons ook al gedink het ons in Narnia was nie.” “Gaan aan,” sê Susan. “Ek dink ek begin verstaan.” “En dit beteken,” sê Edmund, “dat as jy eers uit Narnia is, jy nie 'n benul het hoe Narniaanse tyd werk nie. Hoekom kan daar nie honderde jare in Narnia verbygaan terwyl daar vir ons

in Engeland net een jaar verby is nie?”

“Sowaar, Ed,” sê Peter. “Ek dink jy het dit. As dit so is, kan dit regtig honderde jare gelede wees dat ons in Kair Paravel gewoon het. En nou kom ons in Narnia aan net soos die kruisvaarders of oeroue Britte of iemand heel anders in ’n moderne land sou aankom!”

“Dink net hoe bly gaan hulle wees om ons te sien — ” begin Lucy, maar op daardie oomblik sê al die ander, “Sjuut!” en “Kyk!” Want nou is daar iets aan die gebeur. Daar is ’n beboste uitsteeksel op die vasteland ’n klein entjie na regs en almal reken die mond van die rivier moet daar rond wees. Maar nou verskyn ’n boot om daardie punt. Toe dit om die draai is, swenk die boot en stuur deur die kanaal op hulle af. Daar is twee mense aan boord: een roei en een sit aan die stuur met ’n bondel wat so kriewel en beweeg dat dit lyk asof dit lewend is. Albei mense lyk soos soldate. Hulle het staalhelms op hul koppe en dra ligte maliekoldertunieke. Hul gesigte is bard en bebaard. Die kinders glip van die strand af by die woud in en wag sonder om ’n beweging te maak.

“Dis ver genoeg,” sê die soldaat aan die roer toe die boot net mooi oorkant hulle is.

“Moet ons nie ’n klip aan sy voete vasmaak nie, kor- poraal?” vra die ander een wat op sy roeispans rus.

“Nonsens!” grom die eerste een. “Dis nie nodig nie, en ons het ook nie een saamgebring nie. Hy sal goed genoeg sonder ’n klip verdrink, solank ons die toue net stewig vasgemaak het.” Met hierdie woorde staan hy op en lig die bondel op. Nou sien Peter dit lewe regtig — en dis ’n

dwerg wie se hande en voete vasgebind is en wat spar- tel so wat hy kan. Die volgende oomblik hoor hy ’n tweng langs sy oor en die soldaat gooi sy arms meteens op, laat val die dwerg in die bodem van die boot en tuimel in die water. Hy sukkel na die oorkantste wal en Peter weet Susan se pyl het sy helm getref. Hy draai om en sien sy is baie bleek, maar reeds besig om haar boog met ’n tweede pyl te span. Maar dit word nooit gebruik nie. Toe hy sy metgesel sien val, spring die ander soldaat met ’n harde kreet oor die kant van die boot, struikel ook deur die water (wat skynbaar net diep genoeg vir hom is) en verdwyn tussen die bosse op die vasteland.

“Gou! Voor dit wegdryf!” skree Peter. Hy en Susan spring klere en al in en nog voor die water by hul skouers is, is hul hande al op die kant van die boot. Binne ’n paar oomblikke het hulle dit wal toe gesleep en die dwerg uitgelig en is Edmund besig om die toue met sy sakmes los te sny. (Peter se swaard sou skerper gewees het, maar ’n swaard is baie ongerieflik vir hierdie soort ding, omdat jy dit nie laer as die hef kan vashou nie.)

Toe die dwerg uiteindelik los is, sit hy regop, vryf sy arms en bene en roep uit, “Wel, maak nie saak wat almal sê nie, julle *voel* nie soos spoke nie.”

Soos die meeste dwerge is hy stewig gebou met ’n breë borskas. Hy sal omtrent drie voet hoog wees as hy regop staan en het ’n woeste rooi snor en baard waar- agter min van sy gesig uitsteek, behalwe ’n skerp punt- neus en vonkelende swart ogies.

“In elk geval,” gaan hy voort, “spoke of te nie, julle het my lewe gered en daaroor is ek julle veel verskuldig.” “Maar hoekom sal ons spoke wees?” vra Lucy.

“My lewe lank het almal vir my gesê,” sê die dwerg, “daar is in hierdie woude langs die kus net soveel spoke as home. Dis die storie. En dis hoekom, as hulle van ie- mand ontslae wil raak, hulle hom hierheen bring (soos hulle met my gemaak het) en sê hulle gaan hom vir die spoke los. Maar ek het nog altyd gewonder of hulle nie eintlik verdrink of keelaf gesny word nie. Ek het nog nooit heeltemal in spoke geglo nie. Maar daardie twee papbroeke wat julle geskiet het, het alles geglo. Hulle was banger om my na my dood te bring as wat ek was!”

“O,” sê Susan. “Dis dan hoekom hulle weggehardloop het.”

“Hm? Wat sê jy daar?” vra die dwerg.

“Hulle het weggekom,” sê Edmund. “Hulle is na die vasteland toe.”

“Ek het nie geskiet om dood te skiet nie,” sê Susan. Sy wil nie hê enigiemand moet dink sy sal op so ’n kort af- stand mis skiet nie.

“Hm,” sê die dwerg. “Dis minder goed. Dit kan moei- likheid beteken. Tensy hulle hul monde hou, om hulle eie bas te red.”

“Hoekom het hulle jou in elk geval probeer verdrink?” vra Peter.

“O, ek is ’n gevaarlike misdadiger, dis wat ek is,” sê die dwerg opgewek. “Maar dis ’n lang storie. Intussen wonder ek of julle my vir ontbyt gaan nooi. Julle het nie ’n idee hoe honger so ’n teregstellery ’n mens maak nie.” “Daar’s net appels,” sê Lucy mistroostig.

“Beter as niks, maar nie so goed soos vars vis nie,” sê die dwerg. “Dit lyk asof ek julle eerder vir ontbyt moet nooi. Ek het hengelgoed in hul boot gesien. En ons moet dit in elk geval na die ander kant van die eiland toe vat. Ons kan nie dat iemand dit van die land af sien nie.”

“Ek moes daaraan gedink het,” sê Peter.

Die vier kinders en die dwerg gaan na die waterkant, stoot die boot met groot moeite weg, en klouter aan boord. Die dwerg is dadelik in beheer. Die roeispans is natuurlik te groot vir hom, dus roei Peter terwyl die dwerg hulle noordwaarts deur die kanaal stuur en dan ooswaarts om die punt van die eiland. Van hier af kan die kinders teen die rivier op kyk en al die baaie en

land- punte van die kus aan die oorkant sien. Hulle verbeel hulle hul herken gedeeltes, maar die woud het sedert hul tyd so groot geword dat alles baie anders lyk. Toe hulle om die draai in oopsee aan die oostekant van die eiland kom, begin die dwerg visvang. Hulle het later 'n hele paar pavenders, reënboogkleurige visse wat hulle in die ou dae by Kair Paravel geëet het. Toe hulle genoeg gevang het, stuur hulle die boot na 'n kleinerige inham en bind dit aan 'n boom vas. Die dwerg is baie goed met sy hande (ek het al van onhandige dwerge gehoor, maar nog nooit van dommes nie); hy sny die visse oop, maak hulle skoon en sê, "Nou moet ons vuur- maakhout kry."

"Ons het 'n bietjie daar bo by die kasteel," sê Edmund.

Die dwerg fluit laag. "Baarde en bedstyle!" sê hy. "Dan is daar sowaar 'n kasteel?"

"Dis net 'n murasie," sê Lucy.

Die dwerg staar na die vierstuks met 'n baie eenaar- dige uitdrukking op sy gesig. "En wie op aarde — ?" begin hy, maar dan onderbreek hy homself en sê, "Maak nie saak nie. Eers ontbyt. Maar net een ding voor ons aan- gaan. Kan julle jul hande op jul harte lê en vir my sê ek lewe regtig nog? Is julle seker ek het nie verdrink en ons is almal spoke nie?"

Toe hulle hom gerusgestel het, is die volgende vraag hoe hulle die vis gaan dra. Hulle het niks om dit mee in te ryg nie en het ook nie 'n mandjie nie. Op die ou end moet hulle Edmund se hoed gebruik omdat niemand anders een het nie. Hy sou 'n groter bohaai oor sy hoed gemaak het as hy nie so rasend honger was nie.

Aanvanklik lyk die dwerg nie juis op sy gemak by die kasteel nie. Hy kyk aanmekaar rond en snuif en sê, "Hm. Lyk tog 'n bietjie spokerig. Ruik ook na spoke." Maar toe die vuur aangesteek is, begin hy opbeur en wys vir hulle hoe om die vars pavenders op die kole te braai. Om warm vis sonder vurke en met een sakmes tussen vyf mense te eet, is 'n morsige affêre en voor die maaltyd oor is, is daar verskeie verbrande vingers; maar aangesien dit nou nege-uur is en hulle al van vyfuur af op is, is niemand so begaan oor die brandplekke soos jy sou verwag nie. Toe almal die ete met 'n paar slukke water uit die put en 'n appel of wat afgerond het, haal die dwerg 'n pyp wat amper so lank soos sy arm is uit, stop dit, steek dit aan, blaas 'n groot wolk geurige rook uit en sê, "Nou toe."

"Vertel jy jou storie eerste," sê Peter. "En dan sal ons vir jou ons s'n vertel."

"Wel," sê die dwerg, "aangesien julle my lewe gered het, is dit net billik dat julle jul sin kry. Maar ek weet skaars waar om te begin. In die eerste plek, ek is 'n bood- skapper vir prins Kaspian."

“Wie’s hy?” vra vier stemme gelyk.

“Kaspian die Tiende, koning van Narnia, en mag hy lank regeer!” antwoord die dwerg. “Oftewel, hy behoort koning van Narnia te wees en ons hoop hy sal. Maar op die oomblik is hy net koning van die Ou Narniane — ”

“Wat bedoel jy met die *On* Narniane?” vra Lucy.

“O, dis ons,” sê die dwerg. “Ek kan seker sê ons is soort van rebelle.”

“Ek sien,” sê Peter. “En Kaspian is hoof van die Ou Narniane.”

“Wel, by wyse van spreke,” sê die dwerg terwyl hy sy kop krap. “Maar eintlik is hy ’n Nuwe Narniaan, ’n Tel- mareen, as jy weet wat ek bedoel.”

“Ek weet nie,” sê Edmund.

“Dis alles so deurmekaar,” sê Lucy.

“O maggies,” sê die dwerg. “Ek vertel te deurmekaar. Hoor hier, ek dink ek moet teruggaan na reg aan die begin en vir julle vertel hoe Kaspian in sy oom se hof grootgeword het, en hoe dit gebeur het dat hy aan ons kant is. Maar dis ’n lang storie.”

“Des te beter,” sê Lucy. “Ons hou van stories.”

Die dwerg maak hom gemaklik en begin vertel. Ek sal dit nie in sy woorde herhaal met al die kinders se vrae en onderbrekings nie, want dit sal te lank neem en ver- warrend wees, en sekere goed wat die kinders eers later gehoor het, sal nog steeds uitgelaat word. Maar die kern van die storie soos hulle dit op die ou end verstaan het, is soos volg.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DWARF TELLS OF PRINCE CASPIAN

PRINCE CASPIAN LIVED IN A GREAT CASTLE in the center of Narnia with his uncle, Miraz, the King of Narnia, and his aunt, who had red hair and was called Queen Prunaprismia. His father and mother were dead and the person whom Caspian loved best was his nurse, and though (being a prince) he had wonderful toys which would do almost anything but talk, he liked best the last hour of the day when the toys had all been put back in their cupboards and Nurse would tell him stories.

He did not care much for his uncle and aunt, but about twice a week his uncle would send for him and they would walk up and down together for half an hour on the terrace at the south side of the castle. One day, while they were doing this, the King said to him,

"Well, boy, we must soon teach you to ride and use a sword. You know that your aunt and I have no children, so it looks as if you might have to be King when I'm gone. How shall you like that, eh?"

"I don't know, Uncle," said Caspian.

"Don't know, eh?" said Miraz. "Why, I should like to know what more anyone could wish for!"

"All the same, I *do* wish," said Caspian.

"What do you wish?" asked the King.

"I wish—I wish—I wish I could have lived in the Old Days," said Caspian. (He was only a very little boy at the time.)

Up till now King Miraz had been talking in the tiresome way that some grown-ups have, which makes it quite clear that they are not really interested in what you are saying, but now he suddenly gave Caspian a very sharp look.

"Eh? What's that?" he said. "What old days do you mean?"

"Oh, don't you know, Uncle?" said Caspian. "When everything was quite different. When all the animals could talk, and there were nice people who lived in the streams and the trees. Naiads and Dryads they were called. And there were Dwarfs. And there were lovely little Fauns in all the woods. They had feet like goats. And—"

"That's all nonsense, for babies," said the King sternly. "Only fit for babies, do you hear? You're getting too old for that sort of stuff. At your age you ought to be thinking of battles and adventures, not fairy tales."

"Oh, but there *were* battles and adventures in those days," said Caspian. "Wonderful adventures. Once there was a White Witch and she made herself Queen of the whole country. And she made it so that it was always winter. And then two boys and two girls came from somewhere and so they killed the Witch and they were made Kings and Queens of Narnia, and their names were Peter and Susan and

Edmund and Lucy. And so they reigned for ever so long and everyone had a lovely time, and it was all because of Aslan—”

“Who’s he?” said Miraz. And if Caspian had been a very little older, the tone of his uncle’s voice would have warned him that it would be wiser to shut up. But he babbled on,

“Oh, don’t you know?” he said. “Aslan is the great Lion who comes from over the sea.”

“Who has been telling you all this nonsense?” said the King in a voice of thunder. Caspian was frightened and said nothing.

“Your Royal Highness,” said King Miraz, letting go of Caspian’s hand, which he had been holding till now, “I insist upon being answered. Look me in the face. Who has been telling you this pack of lies?”

“N—Nurse,” faltered Caspian, and burst into tears.

“Stop that noise,” said his uncle, taking Caspian by the shoulders and giving him a shake. “Stop it. And never let me catch you talking—or *thinking* either—about all those silly stories again. There never were those Kings and Queens. How could there be two Kings at the same time? And there’s no such person as Aslan. And there are no such things as lions. And there never was a time when animals could talk. Do you hear?”

“Yes, Uncle,” sobbed Caspian.

“Then let’s have no more of it,” said the King. Then he called to one of the gentlemen-in-waiting who were standing at the far end of the terrace and said in a cold voice, “Conduct His Royal Highness to his apartments and send His Royal Highness’s nurse to me AT ONCE.”

Next day Caspian found what a terrible thing he had done, for Nurse had been sent away without even being allowed to say good-bye to him, and he was told he was to have a Tutor.

Caspian missed his nurse very much and shed many tears; and because he was so miserable, he thought about the old stories of Narnia far more than before. He dreamed of Dwarfs and Dryads every night and tried very hard to make the dogs and cats in the castle talk to him. But the dogs only wagged their tails and the cats only purred.



Caspian felt sure that he would hate the new Tutor, but when the new Tutor arrived about a week later he turned out to be the sort of

person it is almost impossible not to like. He was the smallest, and also the fattest, man Caspian had ever seen. He had a long, silvery, pointed beard which came down to his waist, and his face, which was brown and covered with wrinkles, looked very wise, very ugly, and very kind. His voice was grave and his eyes were merry so that, until you got to know him really well, it was hard to know when he was joking and when he was serious. His name was Doctor Cornelius.



Of all his lessons with Doctor Cornelius the one that Caspian liked best was History. Up till now, except for Nurse's stories, he had known nothing about the History of Narnia, and he was very surprised to learn that the royal family were newcomers in the country.

"It was your Highness's ancestor, Caspian the First," said Doctor Cornelius, "who first conquered Narnia and made it his kingdom. It was he who brought all your nation into the country. You are not native Narnians at all. You are all Telmarines—that is, you all came from the Land of Telmar, far beyond the Western Mountains. That is why Caspian the First is called Caspian the Conqueror."

"Please, Doctor," asked Caspian one day, "who lived in Narnia before we all came here out of Telmar?"

"No men—or very few—lived in Narnia before the Telmarines took it," said Doctor Cornelius.

"Then who did my great-great-grandcesters conquer?"

"*Whom*, not *who*, your Highness," said Doctor Cornelius. "Perhaps it is time to turn from History to Grammar."

"Oh please, not yet," said Caspian. "I mean, wasn't there a battle? Why is he called Caspian the Conqueror if there was nobody to fight with him?"

"I said there were very few *men* in Narnia," said the Doctor, looking at the little boy very strangely through his great spectacles.

For a moment Caspian was puzzled and then suddenly his heart gave a leap. "Do you mean," he gasped, "that there were other things? Do you mean it was like in the stories? Were there—?"

"Hush!" said Doctor Cornelius, laying his head very close to Caspian's. "Not a word more. Don't you know your Nurse was sent away for telling you about Old Narnia? The King doesn't like it. If he found me telling you secrets, you'd be whipped and I should have my

head cut off."

"But why?" asked Caspian.

"It is high time we turned to Grammar now," said Doctor Cornelius in a loud voice. "Will your Royal Highness be pleased to open Pulverulentus Siccus at the fourth page of his *Grammatical garden or the Arbour of Accidence pleasantly open'd to Tender Wits?*"

After that it was all nouns and verbs till lunchtime, but I don't think Caspian learned much. He was too excited. He felt sure that Doctor Cornelius would not have said so much unless he meant to tell him more sooner or later.

In this he was not disappointed. A few days later his Tutor said, "Tonight I am going to give you a lesson in Astronomy. At dead of night two noble planets, Tarva and Alambil, will pass within one degree of each other. Such a conjunction has not occurred for two hundred years, and your Highness will not live to see it again. It will be best if you go to bed a little earlier than usual. When the time of the conjunction draws near, I will come and wake you."

This didn't seem to have anything to do with Old Narnia, which was what Caspian really wanted to hear about, but getting up in the middle of the night is always interesting and he was moderately pleased. When he went to bed that night, he thought at first that he would not be able to sleep; but he soon dropped off and it seemed only a few minutes before he felt someone gently shaking him.

He sat up in bed and saw that the room was full of moonlight. Doctor Cornelius, muffled in a hooded robe and holding a small lamp in his hand, stood by the bedside. Caspian remembered at once what they were going to do. He got up and put on some clothes. Although it was a summer night he felt colder than he had expected and was quite glad when the Doctor wrapped him in a robe like his own and gave him a pair of warm, soft buskins for his feet. A moment later, both muffled so that they could hardly be seen in the dark corridors, and both shod so that they made almost no noise, master and pupil left the room.

Caspian followed the Doctor through many passages and up several staircases, and at last, through a little door in a turret, they came out upon the leads. On one side were the battlements, on the other a steep roof; below them, all shadowy and shimmery, the castle gardens; above them, stars and moon. Presently they came to another door, which led into the great central tower of the whole castle: Doctor Cornelius unlocked it and they began to climb the dark winding stair of the tower. Caspian was becoming excited; he had never been allowed up this stair before.

It was long and steep, but when they came out on the roof of the tower and Caspian had got his breath, he felt that it had been well worth it. Away on his right he could see, rather indistinctly, the Western

Mountains. On his left was the gleam of the Great River, and everything was so quiet that he could hear the sound of the waterfall at Beversdam, a mile away. There was no difficulty in picking out the two stars they had come to see. They hung rather low in the southern sky, almost as bright as two little moons and very close together.

"Are they going to have a collision?" he asked in an awestruck voice.

"Nay, dear Prince," said the Doctor (and he too spoke in a whisper). "The great lords of the upper sky know the steps of their dance too well for that. Look well upon them. Their meeting is fortunate and means some great good for the sad realm of Narnia. Tarva, the Lord of Victory, salutes Alambil, the Lady of Peace. They are just coming to their nearest."

"It's a pity that tree gets in the way," said Caspian. "We'd really see better from the West Tower, though it is not so high."

Doctor Cornelius said nothing for about two minutes, but stood still with his eyes fixed on Tarva and Alambil. Then he drew a deep breath and turned to Caspian.

"There," he said. "You have seen what no man now alive has seen, nor will see again. And you are right. We should have seen it even better from the smaller tower. I brought you here for another reason."

Caspian looked up at him, but the Doctor's hood concealed most of his face.

"The virtue of this tower," said Doctor Cornelius, "is that we have six empty rooms beneath us, and a long stair, and the door at the bottom of the stair is locked. We cannot be overheard."

"Are you going to tell me what you wouldn't tell me the other day?" said Caspian.

"I am," said the Doctor. "But remember. You and I must never talk about these things except here—on the very top of the Great Tower."



"No. That's a promise," said Caspian. "But do go on, please."

"Listen," said the Doctor. "All you have heard about Old Narnia is true. It is not the land of Men. It is the country of Aslan, the country of the Waking Trees and Visible Naiads, of Fauns and Satyrs, of Dwarfs and Giants, of the gods and the Centaurs, of Talking Beasts. It was against these that the first Caspian fought. It is you Telmarines who silenced the beasts and the trees and the fountains, and who killed and drove away the Dwarfs and Fauns, and are now trying to cover up

even the memory of them. The King does not allow them to be spoken of."

"Oh, I do wish we hadn't," said Caspian. "And I *am* glad it was all true, even if it is all over."

"Many of your race wish that in secret," said Doctor Cornelius.

"But, Doctor," said Caspian, "why do you say *my* race? After all, I suppose you're a Telmarine too."

"Am I?" said the Doctor.

"Well, you're a Man anyway," said Caspian.

"Am I?" repeated the Doctor in a deeper voice, at the same moment throwing back his hood so that Caspian could see his face clearly in the moonlight.

All at once Caspian realized the truth and felt that he ought to have realized it long before. Doctor Cornelius was so small, and so fat, and had such a very long beard. Two thoughts came into his head at the same moment. One was a thought of terror—"He's not a real man, not a man at all, he's a *Dwarf*, and he's brought me up here to kill me." The other was sheer delight—"There are real Dwarfs still, and I've seen one at last."

"So you've guessed it in the end," said Doctor Cornelius. "Or guessed it nearly right. I'm not a pure Dwarf. I have human blood in me too. Many Dwarfs escaped in the great battles and lived on, shaving their beards and wearing high-heeled shoes and pretending to be men. They have mixed with your Telmarines. I am one of those, only a half-Dwarf, and if any of my kindred, the true Dwarfs, are still alive anywhere in the world, doubtless they would despise me and call me a traitor. But never in all these years have we forgotten our own people and all the other happy creatures of Narnia, and the long-lost days of freedom."

"I'm—I'm sorry, Doctor," said Caspian. "It wasn't my fault, you know."

"I am not saying these things in blame of you, dear Prince," answered the Doctor. "You may well ask why I say them at all. But I have two reasons. Firstly, because my old heart has carried these secret memories so long that it aches with them and would burst if I did not whisper them to you. But secondly, for this: that when you become King you may help us, for I know that you also, Telmarine though you are, love the Old Things."

"I do, I do," said Caspian. "But how can I help?"

"You can be kind to the poor remnants of the Dwarf people, like myself. You can gather learned magicians and try to find a way of awaking the trees once more. You can search through all the nooks and wild places of the land to see if any Fauns or Talking Beasts or Dwarfs are perhaps still alive in hiding."

"Do you think there are any?" asked Caspian eagerly.

"I don't know—I don't know," said the Doctor with a deep sigh. "Sometimes I am afraid there can't be. I have been looking for traces of them all my life. Sometimes I have thought I heard a Dwarf-drum in the mountains. Sometimes at night, in the woods, I thought I had caught a glimpse of Fauns and Satyrs dancing a long way off; but when I came to the place, there was never anything there. I have often despaired; but something always happens to start me hoping again. I don't know. But at least you can try to be a King like the High King Peter of old, and not like your uncle."

"Then it's true about the Kings and Queens too, and about the White Witch?" said Caspian.

"Certainly it is true," said Cornelius. "Their reign was the Golden Age in Narnia and the land has never forgotten them."

"Did they live in this castle, Doctor?"

"Nay, my dear," said the old man. "This castle is a thing of yesterday. Your great-great-grandfather built it. But when the two sons of Adam and the two daughters of Eve were made Kings and Queens of Narnia by Aslan himself, they lived in the castle of Cair Paravel. No man alive has seen that blessed place and perhaps even the ruins of it have now vanished. But we believe it was far from here, down at the mouth of the Great River, on the very shore of the sea."

"Ugh!" said Caspian with a shudder. "Do you mean in the Black Woods? Where all the—the—you know, the ghosts live?"

"Your Highness speaks as you have been taught," said the Doctor. "But it is all lies. There are no ghosts there. That is a story invented by the Telmarines. Your Kings are in deadly fear of the sea because they can never quite forget that in all stories Aslan comes from over the sea. They don't want to go near it and they don't want anyone else to go near it. So they have let great woods grow up to cut their people off from the coast. But because they have quarreled with the trees they are afraid of the woods. And because they are afraid of the woods they imagine that they are full of ghosts. And the Kings and great men, hating both the sea and the wood, partly believe these stories, and partly encourage them. They feel safer if no one in Narnia dares to go down to the coast and look out to sea—toward Aslan's land and the morning and the eastern end of the world."

There was a deep silence between them for a few minutes. Then Doctor Cornelius said, "Come. We have been here long enough. It is time to go down and to bed."

"Must we?" said Caspian. "I'd like to go on talking about these things for hours and hours and hours."

"Someone might begin looking for us, if we did that," said Doctor Cornelius.

HOOFSTUK 4

Die dwerg vertel van prins Kaspian



Prins Kaspian het in 'n groot kasteel in die middel van Narnia gewoon: by sy oom Miraz, die koning van Narnia, en sy tante wat rooi hare gehad het en koningin Prunaprismia genoem is. Sy vader en moeder was dood en die persoon vir wie Kaspian die liefste was, was sy oppasster, en hoewel hy as prins die wonderlikste speel- goed gehad het wat amper alles kon doen behalwe praat, was die laaste halfuur van die dag vir hom die lekkerste. Dan is al sy speelgoed in die kaste weggepak en het sy oppasster vir hom stories vertel.

Hy het nie baie van sy oom en tante gehou nie, maar sy oom het hom omtrent twee keer per week laat roep en dan het hulle vir 'n halfuur saam heen en weer op die terras aan die suidekant van die kasteel gestap. Eendag terwyl hulle hiermee besig was, het die koning vir hom gesê, “Wel, seun, ons moet binnekort vir jou leer hoe om perd te ry en 'n swaard te gebruik. Jy weet ek en jou tante het nie kinders nie, dus lyk dit asof jy eendag wan- neer ek heengegaan het, koning sal wees. Hoe sal jy daarvan hou, hm?”

“Ek weet nie, oom,” sê Kaspian.

“Weet nie, hm?” sê Miraz. “Sowaar, ek wens ek kon weet wat iemand eerder as dit sal wil hê!”

“Wel, daar is iets waarvoor ek wens,” sê Kaspian. “Wat is jou wens?” vra die koning.

“Ek wens - ek wens — ek wens ek het in die Outyd geleef,” sê Kaspian. (Hy was toe nog 'n baie klein seuntjie.)

Tot nou toe het koning Miraz op die irriterende manier gepraat wat grootmense soms gebruik wanneer dit duidelik is dat hulle glad nie belangstel in wat jy sê nie, maar nou kyk hy skielik deurdringend na Kaspian.

“Hm? Wat sê jy daar? Watter Outyd bedoel jy?”

“O, weet oom dan nie?” vra Kaspian. “Toe alles heel- temal anders was. Toe al die diere kon praat en daar gawe mense in die strome en in die bome gewoon het. Hulle is waternimfe en bosnimfe genoem. En daar was dwerge. En daar was lieflike klein faune in al die woude. Hulle het voete soos bokke gehad. En — ”

“Dis alles snert,” sê die koning streng. “Net snertstories vir babas, hoor

jy my? Jy's te oud vir daardie soort twak. Op jou ouderdom moet jy aan oorloë en avonture dink, nie aan feëverhale nie."

"O, maar daar *was* oorloë en avonture in daardie dae," sê Kaspian. "Wonderlike avonture. Daar was eenkeer 'n Wit Heks wat gesorg het dat sy koningin van die hele land word. Sy het gemaak dat dit altyd winter is. En toe hot twee seuns en twee meisies van iewers af gekom en die heks doodgemaak en hulle het konings en koninginne

van Narnia geword en hul name was Peter en Susan en Edmund en Lucy. En hulle het vir 'n hele ruk regeer en almal was gelukkig en dit was alles oor Aslan - "

"Wie is hy?" wil Miraz weet. As Kaspian 'n bietjie ouer was, sou sy oom se stemtoon hom gewaarsku het dat dit beter sal wees om eerder stil te bly. Maar hy babbel voort.

"O, weet oom dan nie?" vra hy. "Aslan is die groot leeu wat van oor die see kom."

"Wie het vir jou al hierdie onsin vertel?" Die koning se stem klink soos onweer. Kaspian skrik en sê niks.

"U koninklike hoogheid," sê koning Miraz en hy los Kaspian se hand wat hy tot nou toe vasgehou het, "ek dring daarop aan dat jy my antwoord, Kyk my in die oë. Wie het vir jou hierdie spul leuens vertel?"

"M-my oppasster," hinkel Kaspian en bars in tranen uit. "Staak die lawaai," sê sy oom en vat Kaspian se skouers vas en skud hom. "Hou op! En laat ek jou weer vang dat jy oor daardie bogstories praat — of *dink*. Daar was nooit sulke konings en koninginne nie. Hoe kan daar twee konings wil wees? En daar is nie iemand soos Aslan nie. En daar is nie sulke goed soos leus nie. En daar was nooit 'n tyd toe diere kon praat nie. Hoor jy my?"

"Ja, oom," snik Kaspian.

"Dan is dit nou afgehandel," sê die koning. Toe roep hy een van die howelinge wat aan die verste punt van die terras staan en sê in 'n koue stem, "Begelei sy Koninklike Hoogheid na sy slaapkamer en stuur sy Koninklike Hoogheid se oppasster DADELIK hierheen."

Die volgende dag vind Kaspian uit wat 'n vreeslike ding hy gedoen het, want sy oppasster is weggestuur sonder dat sy eens vir hom kon groet en hy moet hoor dat hy nou 'n privaatonderwyser het.

Kaspian het sy oppasster baie gemis en baie tranen oor haar gestort; en omdat hy so mistroostig was, het hy baie meer as tevore aan die ou stories van Narnia gedink. Hy het elke nag van dwerge en bosnimfe gedroom en baie hard probeer om die honde en katte in die kasteel met hom te laat praat. Maar die honde het bloot hul sterte geswaai en die katte het net gespin.

Kaspian was seker hy sou hierdie nuwe onderwyser haat, maar toe die man omtrent 'n week later opdaag, is hy die soort persoon van wie 'n mens moet hou. Hy is die kleinste en ook die vetste man wat Kaspian nog ooit gesien het. Hy het 'n lang gepunte silwer baard wat tot by sy middel kom en sy gesig, wat bruin en vol plooië is, is baie wys, baie lelik en baie vriendelik. Sy stem is ern- stig en sy oë is prettig, sodat dit baie moeilik is om te weet wanneer hy 'n grap maak en wanneer hy ernstig is, tensy jy hom baie goed ken. Sy naam is doktor Kor- nelius.

Van al sy lesse by doktor Korne- lius hou Kaspian die meeste van Geskiedenis. Tot nou toe het hy niks van Narnia se geskiedenis geweet nie, behalwe wat sy oppasster vir hom vertel het, en hy is verbaas om te hoor dat die konink- like familie nuwelinge in die land is.

“Dit was u Hoogheid se voorvader, Kaspian die Eer- ste,” sê doktor Kornelius, “wat Narnia aanvanklik inge- neem en as koninkryk verower het. Dit was hy wat jul nasie na die land gebring het. Julie is glad nie oorspronk- like Narniane nie. Julie is Telmarene - dit wil sê julle kom van die land Telmar, ver anderkant die Westelike Gebergtes. Dit is hoekom Kaspian die Eerste ook Kaspian die Oorwinnaar genoem word.”

“Asseblief, doktor,” vra Kaspian op 'n dag, “wie het in Narnia gewoon voor ons almal van Telmar af hierheen gekom het?”

“Geen mense — of baie min — het in Narnia gewoon voor die Telmarene die land ingeneem het,” sê doktor Kornelius.

“Wie het my groot-groot-oupagrootjie dan verslaan?”

“Vir wie, nie wie nie, u hoogheid,” sê doktor Kornelius. “Dalk is dit tyd om van Geskiedenis na Grammatika oor te skakel.”

“O, asseblief, nie nou al nie,” sê Kaspian. “Ek bedoel, was daar nie 'n oorlog nie? Hoekom is hy Kaspian die Oorwinnaar genoem as daar niemand was om teen te veg nie?”

“Ek het gesê daar was baie *min* mense in Narnia,” ant- woord die doktor en hy kyk effens skeef deur sy groot brilglase na die klein seuntjie voor hom.

Vir 'n oomblik is Kaspian uit die veld geslaan en dan gee sy hart skielik 'n wilde skop. “Bedoel u,” snak hy, “dat daar ander goed was? Soos in die stories? Was daar - ?”

“Sjuut,” sê doktor Kornelius en hou sy kop baie na aan Kaspian s'n. “Nie 'n verdere woord nie. Weet jy nie dat jou ou oppasster weggestuur is omdat sy vir jou van Ou Narnia vertel het nie? Die koning hou nie daarvan nie. As hy my moet vang waar ek vir jou geheime vertel, sal hy my laat gesel en my kop sal afgekap word.”

“Maar hoekom?” vra Kaspian.

“Dit is hoog tyd dat ons ’n bietjie Grammatika doen,” sê doktor Kornelius in ’n harde stem. “Sal u Hoogheid asseblief vir Pulverulentus Siccus oopmaak by die vierde bladsy van sy *Grammatikale Tuin of die Priële van Verbui- gingsleer, op plesierige wyse aangebied vir Tere Jong Gemoe- dere?*”

Daarna was dit selfstandige naamwoorde en werk- woorde tot middagete toe, maar ek dink nie Kaspian het veel geleer nie. Hy was te opgewonde. Hy was oortuig doktor Kornelius sou nie dit alles gesê het as hy nie van plan was om hom die een of ander tyd meer te vertel nie.

Hierin is hy nie teleurgestel nie. ’n Paar dae later sê sy onderwyser, “Vanaand gaan ek vir jou ’n les in Sterre- kunde gee. In die middel van die nag gaan twee edele planete, Tarva en Alambil, binne een graad van mekaar verbybeweeg. So ’n konjunksie het tweehonderd jaar ge- lede laas gebeur en u Hoogheid sal nie leef om dit weer te sien nie. Dit sal goed wees as u vanaand n bietjie vroeër as gewoonlik gaan slaap. Wanneer dit tyd vir die konjunksie is, sal ek u kom wakker maak.”

Dit klink nie asof dit enigiets te doen het met Ou Narnia, waarvan Kaspian eintlik wil hoor nie, maar om in die middel van die nag op te staan, is altyd lekker en hy is tog effens in sy skik. Toe hy daardie aand bed toe gaan, dink hy eers hy sal nie kan slaap nie, maar hy dommel gou in en dit voel asof hy skaars geslaap het toe iemand hom liggies skud.

Hy sit regop in sy bed en sien die kamer is vol maan- lig. Doktor Kornelius, toegewikkel in ’n mantel met ’n kap, staan langs sy bed met ’n klein lampie in die hand. Kaspian onthou dadelik wat hulle gaan doen. Hy staan op en trek sy klere aan. Hoewel dit ’n someraand is, is dit kouer as wat hy verwag het en hy is nogal bly toe die doktor hom in ’w mantel net soos syne toewikkel en vir hom ’n paar sagte, warm stewels vir sy voete gee. Toe meester en leerling die kamer ’n rukkie later verlaat, is albei so toegedraai dat hulle omtrent nie in die donker gange gesien kan word nie, en hulle het skoene aan wat skaars ’n geluid maak.

Kaspian volg die doktor deur talle gange en met et- like trappe op; uiteindelik gaan hulle deur ’n klein deur- tjie in ’n toring en kom bo by die looddak uit. Aan die een kant is die kantele en aan die ander kant ’n steil dak. Onder hulle, vol lig en skaduwees, is die kasteeltuine en bo hulle skyn sterre en die maan. Eindelik kom hulle by nog ’n deur wat na die kasteel se groot sentrale toring lei. Doktor Kornelius sluit dit oop en begin die donker kronkeltrap uitklim. Kaspian is besig om opgewonde te raak. Hy is nog nooit tevore toegelaat om met hierdie trap na bo te gaan nie.

Dit is lank en steil, maar toe hulle op die toring se dak uitkom en Kaspian weer sy asem terug het, voel hy tog dit was die moeite werd. In die verte,

dofweg na regs, sien hy die Westelike Gebergtes. Aan sy linkerkant glinster die Grootrivier en alles is so stil dat hy die geluid van die waterval by Bewersdam 'n myl daarvandaan kan hoor. Dit is nie moeilik om die twee sterre waarna hulle kom kyk het, te kry nie. Hulle hang redelik laag in die suidelike hemeltrans, is amper so helder soos twee klein mane en baie na aan mekaar.

“Gaan hulle teen mekaar bots?” vra hy benoud.

“Nee, liewe prins,” sê die dokter (en hy praat ook in 'n fluisterstem). “Daarvoor ken die groot here van die hemeltrans hul dansstappies te goed. Kyk mooi na hulle. Hul ontmoeting hou geluk in en beteken iets groots en goeds vir die droewige land van Narnia. Tarva, die heer van oorwinning, groet vir Alambil, die dame van vrede. Hulle is nou feitlik op hul naaste aan mekaar.”

“Dis jammer daardie boom is in die pad,” sê Kaspian. “Ons sou beter van die westelike toring af kon sien, hoe- wel dit nie so hoog is nie.”

Vir amper twee minute sê dokter Kornelius niks, maar staan doodstil met sy oë vasgenaël op Tarva en Alambil. Dan trek hy sy asem diep in en draai na Kaspian.

“Daar's hy,” sê hy. “Jy het nou gesien wat geen mens wat nou leef al gesien het of weer sal sien nie. En jy is reg. Ons sou baie beter van die kleiner toring af kon sien. Ek het jou om 'n ander rede hierheen gebring.” Kaspian kyk op na hom, maar die grootste deel van die dokter se gesig is agter sy kap versteek.

“Die voordeel van hierdie toring,” sê doktor Kornelius, “is dat ons ses leë vertrekke onder ons het, en ’n lang trap, en dat die deur aan die onderpunt van die trappe gesluit is. Niemand kan ons hoor nie.”

“Gaan u vir my vertel wat u nie nou die ander dag vir my wou sê nie?” vra Kaspian.

“Ek gaan,” sê die doktor. “Maar onthou, ek en jy mag nooit oor hierdie dinge praat nie, behalwe hier - heel bo op die groot toring.”

“Reg. Dis ’n belofte,” sê Kaspian. “Maar gaan asseblief aan.”

“Luister,” sê die doktor. “Alles wat jy oor Ou Narnia gehoor het, is waar. Dit is nie ’n land van mense nie. Dit is Aslan se land, die land van wakende bome en sigbare bosnimfe, van faune en satirs, van dwerge en reuse, van gode en sentours en van pratende diere. Dit was teen hulle dat die eerste Kaspian geveg het. Dit is julle Telmarene wat die diere en die bome en die fonteine stilgemaak het, wat die dwerge en faune weggejaag het, en wat nou probeer om selfs herinnerings aan hulle toe te smeer. Die koning laat nie toe dat daar oor hulle gepraat word nie.” “O, ek wens ons het nie,” sê Kaspian. “En ek is bly dis alles waar, selfs al is dit ook verby.”

“Baie van jou mense wens dit ook in die geheim,” sê doktor Kornelius. “Maar doktor,” vra Kaspian, “hoekom sê jy *my* mense? Jy is tog ook ’n Telmareen?”

“Is ek?” vra die doktor.

“Wel, jy is ’n mens,” sê Kaspian.

“Is ek?” herhaal die doktor in ’n dieper stem op die selfde oomblik wat hy sy kap afgooi sodat Kaspian sy ge- sig duidelik in die maanlig kan sien. Kaspian snap die waarheid onmiddellik en hy voel hy moes dit lankal geraai het. Doktor Kornelius is so klein en so vet en het so ’n vreeslike lang baard. Twee gedag- tes kom terselfdertyd in Kaspian se kop. Een is ang - “Hy’s nie ’n regte mens nie, glad nie ’n mens nie; hy’s ’n *dwerg*, en hy’t my hierheen gebring om my dood te maak.” Die ander een is louter vreugde - “Daar is nog steeds egte dwerge en ek het uiteindelik een gesien.”

“Jy het dus eindelijk geraai,” sê doktor Kornelius. “Of amper reg geraai. Ek is nie ’n suiwer dwerg nie. Ek het ook mensebloed in my are. Baie dwerge het tydens die groot oorloë ontsnap en hul baarde afgeskeer en hoëhak- skoene gedra en gemaak asof hulle mense is. Hulle het met julle Telmarene gemeng. Ek is een van hulle, ’n half- dwerg, en as daar nog enige ware dwerge iewers in die wêreld is, sal hulle my ongetwyfeld minag en ’n verraaier noem. Maar in al hierdie jare het ons nooit ons eie mense en al Narnia se gelukkige wesens en die langverlore dae van vryheid vergeet nie.

“Ek — ek is jammer, doktor,” sê Kaspian. “Dis nie my skuld nie, weet u.”

“Ek sê nie hierdie dinge om jou te blameer nie, liewe prins,” antwoord die dokter. “Jy kan wel vra hoekom ek dit hoegenaamd sê. Maar ek het twee redes. Eerstens omdat my ou hart al hierdie geheime herinnerings al so lank saamdra dat dit pyn en sal bars as ek hulle nie vir jou fluister nie. Maar tweedens om hierdie rede: wanneer jy koning word, sal jy ons help, want ek weet jy het die On Goed ook lief, al is jy ’n Telmareen.”

“Ek het, ek het,” sê Kaspian. “Maar wat kan ek doen om te help?”

“Jy kan die arme oorblyfsels van die dwerge, soos ek, genadig wees. Jy kan geleerde towenaars bymekaar kry en probeer uitvind hoe om die bome weer wakker te maak. Jy kan hoog en laag in al die land se wilde plekke gaan soek na faune en pratende diere en dwerge wat dalk nog lewe en iewers wegkruip.”

“Dink jy daar is nog eniges?” vra Kaspian gretig.

“Ek weet nie - ek weet nie,” sê die dokter met ’n diep sug. “Soms is ek bevrees daar is nie. Ek soek nog my lewe lank na spore van hulle. Soms verbeel ek my ek hoor ’n dwergtrom in die berge. Soms in die nag in die woud verbeel ek my kry ’n glimp van faune en satirs wat in die verte dans, maar as ek daar kom, is daar nooit iets nie. Ek was al dikwels wanhopig, maar daar gebeur altyd weer iets wat my hoop gee. Ek weet nie. Maar jy kan ten minste probeer om ’n koning soos hoofkoning Peter van ouds te wees, en nie een soos jou oom nie.”

“Dan is alles waar, van die konings en die koninginne en Wit Heks?” vra Kaspian.

“Natuurlik is dit waar,” sê Kornelius. “Hul bewind was Narnia se Goue Tydperk en die land het hulle nooit ver- geet nie.”

“Het hulle in hierdie kasteel gewoon, dokter?”

“Nee, my kind,” sê die ou man. “Hierdie kasteel is so goed soos gister gebou. Jou groot-groot-grootoupa het dit opgerig. Maar toe die twee seuns van Adam en die twee dogters van Eva deur Aslan self konings en koninginne van Narnia gemaak is, het hulle in die kasteel by Kair Paravel gewoon. Geen lewende mens het daardie heilige plek nog ooit gesien nie en dalk het selfs die ruïnes teen hierdie tyd al verdwyn. Maar ons glo dis ver van hier af, onder by die mond van die Grootrivier, by die see. “Ug,” sê Kaspian met ’n rilling. “Bedoel jy in die Swart Woud? Waar al die - die - jy weet, die spoke is?”

U Hoogheid praat soos u geleer is,” sê die dokter. “Maar dis alles leuens. Daar is nie spoke nie. Dis ’n storie wat deur die Telmarene uitgedink is. Jul konings leef in ’n doodse vrees vir die see omdat hulle nooit kan vergeet dat Aslan in al die stories van oor die see gekom het nie. Hulle wil nie naby die see kom nie en hulle wil ook niemand anders daar toelaat nie. Dis hoekom

hulle groot woude daar laat groei het — ora mense van die see af weg te hou. Maar omdat hulle met die bome baklei het, is hulle bang vir die woude. En omdat hulle vir die woude hang is, verbeel hulle hul dis vol spoke. En die konings en groot manne wat sowel die see as die woud haat, glo die stories so half en moedig dit aan. Dit sal hulle on- veilig laat voel as niemand van Narnia na die kus durf gaan en oor die see uitkyk — na Aslan se land en die toe- koms en die wêreld se oostelike eindes.

Vir 'n paar oomblikke heers daar 'n diep stilte tussen hulle. Toe sê doktor Kornelius, “Kom. Ons is nou lank genoeg hier. Dis tyd om bed toe te gaan.”

“Moet ons?” vra Kaspian. “Ek sal nog ure en ure en the oor al hierdie goed kan praat.”

“As ons dit sou doen, sal iemand na ons begin soek,” sê doktor Kornelius.

CHAPTER FIVE

CASPIAN'S ADVENTURE IN THE MOUNTAINS

AFTER THIS, CASPIAN AND HIS TUTOR had many more secret conversations on the top of the Great Tower, and at each conversation Caspian learned more about Old Narnia, so that thinking and dreaming about the old days, and longing that they might come back, filled nearly all his spare hours. But of course he had not many hours to spare, for now his education was beginning in earnest. He learned sword-fighting and riding, swimming and diving, how to shoot with the bow and play on the recorder and the theorbo, how to hunt the stag and cut him up when he was dead, besides Cosmography, Rhetoric, Heraldry, Versification, and of course History, with a little Law, Physic, Alchemy, and Astronomy. Of Magic he learned only the theory, for Doctor Cornelius said the practical part was not proper study for princes. "And I myself," he added, "am only a very imperfect magician and can do only the smallest experiments." Of Navigation ("Which is a noble and heroical art," said the Doctor) he was taught nothing, because King Miraz disapproved of ships and the sea.

He also learned a great deal by using his own eyes and ears. As a little boy he had often wondered why he disliked his aunt, Queen Prunaprisma; he now saw that it was because she disliked him. He also began to see that Narnia was an unhappy country. The taxes were high and the laws were stern and Miraz was a cruel man.

After some years there came a time when the Queen seemed to be ill and there was a great deal of bustle and pother about her in the castle and doctors came and the courtiers whispered. This was in early summertime. And one night, while all this fuss was going on, Caspian was unexpectedly awakened by Doctor Cornelius after he had been only a few hours in bed.

"Are we going to do a little Astronomy, Doctor?" said Caspian.

"Hush!" said the Doctor. "Trust me and do exactly as I tell you. Put on all your clothes; you have a long journey before you."

Caspian was very surprised, but he had learned to have confidence in his Tutor and he began doing what he was told at once. When he was dressed the Doctor said, "I have a wallet for you. We must go into the next room and fill it with victuals from your Highness's supper table."

"My gentlemen-in-waiting will be there," said Caspian.

"They are fast asleep and will not wake," said the Doctor. "I am a very minor magician but I *can* at least contrive a charmed sleep."

They went into the antechamber and there, sure enough, the two gentlemen-in-waiting were, sprawling on chairs and snoring hard.

Doctor Cornelius quickly cut up the remains of a cold chicken and some slices of venison and put them, with bread and an apple or so and a little flask of good wine, into the wallet which he then gave to Caspian. It fitted on by a strap over Caspian's shoulder, like a satchel you would use for taking books to school.

"Have you your sword?" asked the Doctor.

"Yes," said Caspian.

"Then put this mantle over all to hide the sword and the wallet. That's right. And now we must go to the Great Tower and talk."

When they had reached the top of the tower (it was a cloudy night, not at all like the night when they had seen the conjunction of Tarva and Alambil) Doctor Cornelius said,

"Dear Prince, you must leave this castle at once and go to seek your fortune in the wide world. Your life is in danger here."

"Why?" asked Caspian.

"Because you are the true King of Narnia: Caspian the Tenth, the true son and heir of Caspian the Ninth. Long life to your Majesty"—and suddenly, to Caspian's great surprise, the little man dropped down on one knee and kissed his hand.

"What does it all mean? I don't understand," said Caspian.

"I wonder you have never asked me before," said the Doctor, "why, being the son of King Caspian, you are not King Caspian yourself. Everyone except your Majesty knows that Miraz is a usurper. When he first began to rule he did not even pretend to be the King; he called himself Lord Protector. But then your royal mother died, the good Queen and the only Telmarine who was ever kind to me. And then, one by one, all the great lords, who had known your father, died or disappeared. Not by accident, either. Miraz weeded them out. Belisar and Uvilas were shot with arrows on a hunting party: by chance, it was pretended. All the great house of the Passarids he sent to fight giants on the northern frontier till one by one they fell. Arlian and Erimon and a dozen more he executed for treason on a false charge. The two brothers of Beaversdam he shut up as madmen. And finally he persuaded the seven noble lords, who alone among all the Telmarines did not fear the sea, to sail away and look for new lands beyond the Eastern Ocean, and, as he intended, they never came back. And when there was no one left who could speak a word for you, then his flatterers (as he had instructed them) begged him to become King. And of course he did."

"Do you mean he now wants to kill me too?" said Caspian.

"That is almost certain," said Doctor Cornelius.

"But why now?" said Caspian. "I mean, why didn't he do it long ago if he wanted to? And what harm have I done him?"

"He has changed his mind about you because of something that

happened only two hours ago. The Queen has had a son."

"I don't see what that's got to do with it," said Caspian.

"Don't see!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Have all my lessons in History and Politics taught you no more than that? Listen. As long as he had no children of his own, he was willing enough that you should be King after he died. He may not have cared much about you, but he would rather you should have the throne than a stranger. Now that he has a son of his own he will want his own son to be the next King. You are in the way. He'll clear you out of the way."

"Is he really as bad as that?" said Caspian. "Would he really murder me?"

"He murdered your Father," said Doctor Cornelius.

Caspian felt very queer and said nothing.

"I can tell you the whole story," said the Doctor. "But not now. There is no time. You must fly at once."

"You'll come with me?" said Caspian.

"I dare not," said the Doctor. "It would make your danger greater. Two are more easily tracked than one. Dear Prince, dear King Caspian, you must be very brave. You must go alone and at once. Try to get across the southern border to the court of King Nain of Archenland. He will be good to you."

"Shall I never see you again?" said Caspian in a quavering voice.

"I hope so, dear King," said the Doctor. "What friend have I in the wide world except your Majesty? And I have a little magic. But in the meantime, speed is everything. Here are two gifts before you go. This is a little purse of gold—alas, all the treasure in this castle should be your own by rights. And here is something far better."

He put in Caspian's hands something which he could hardly see but which he knew by the feel to be a horn.

"That," said Doctor Cornelius, "is the greatest and most sacred treasure of Narnia. Many terrors I endured, many spells did I utter, to find it, when I was still young. It is the magic horn of Queen Susan herself which she left behind her when she vanished from Narnia at the end of the Golden Age. It is said that whoever blows it shall have strange help—no one can say how strange. It may have the power to call Queen Lucy and King Edmund and Queen Susan and High King Peter back from the past, and they will set all to rights. It may be that it will call up Aslan himself. Take it, King Caspian: but do not use it except at your greatest need. And now, haste, haste, haste. The little door at the very bottom of the Tower, the door into the garden, is unlocked. There we must part."

"Can I get my horse Destrier?" said Caspian.

"He is already saddled and waiting for you just at the corner of the orchard."

During the long climb down the winding staircase Cornelius whispered many more words of direction and advice. Caspian's heart was sinking, but he tried to take it all in. Then came the fresh air in the garden, a fervent handclasp with the Doctor, a run across the lawn, a welcoming whinny from Destrier, and so King Caspian the Tenth left the castle of his fathers. Looking back, he saw fireworks going up to celebrate the birth of the new prince.

All night he rode southward, choosing by-ways and bridle paths through woods as long as he was in country that he knew; but afterward he kept to the high road. Destrier was as excited as his master at this unusual journey, and Caspian, though tears had come into his eyes at saying good-bye to Doctor Cornelius, felt brave and, in a way, happy, to think that he was King Caspian riding to seek adventures, with his sword on his left hip and Queen Susan's magic horn on his right. But when day came, with a sprinkle of rain, and he looked about him and saw on every side unknown woods, wild heaths, and blue mountains, he thought how large and strange the world was and felt frightened and small.

As soon as it was full daylight he left the road and found an open grassy place amid a wood where he could rest. He took off Destrier's bridle and let him graze, ate some cold chicken and drank a little wine, and presently fell asleep. It was late afternoon when he awoke. He ate a morsel and continued his journey, still southward, by many unfrequented lanes. He was now in a land of hills, going up and down, but always more up than down. From every ridge he could see the mountains growing bigger and blacker ahead. As the evening closed in, he was riding their lower slopes. The wind rose. Soon rain fell in torrents. Destrier became uneasy; there was thunder in the air. And now they entered a dark and seemingly endless pine forest, and all the stories Caspian had ever heard of trees being unfriendly to Man crowded into his mind. He remembered that he was, after all, a Telmarine, one of the race who cut down trees wherever they could and were at war with all wild things; and though he himself might be unlike other Telmarines, the trees could not be expected to know this.



Nor did they. The wind became a tempest, the woods roared and creaked all round him. There came a crash. A tree fell right across the

road just behind him. "Quiet, Destrier, quiet!" said Caspian, patting his horse's neck; but he was trembling himself and knew that he had escaped death by an inch. Lightning flashed and a great crack of thunder seemed to break the sky in two just overhead. Destrier bolted in good earnest. Caspian was a good rider, but he had not the strength to hold him back. He kept his seat, but he knew that his life hung by a thread during the wild career that followed. Tree after tree rose up before them in the dusk and was only just avoided. Then, almost too suddenly to hurt (and yet it did hurt him too) something struck Caspian on the forehead and he knew no more.

When he came to himself he was lying in a firelit place with bruised limbs and a bad headache. Low voices were speaking close at hand.

"And now," said one, "before it wakes up we must decide what to do with it."

"Kill it," said another. "We can't let it live. It would betray us."

"We ought to have killed it at once, or else let it alone," said a third voice. "We can't kill it now. Not after we've taken it in and bandaged its head and all. It would be murdering a guest."

"Gentlemen," said Caspian in a feeble voice, "whatever you do to me, I hope you will be kind to my poor horse."

"Your horse had taken flight long before we found you," said the first voice—a curiously husky, earthy voice, as Caspian now noticed.

"Now don't let it talk you round with its pretty words," said the second voice. "I still say—"

"Horns and halibuts!" exclaimed the third voice. "Of course we're not going to murder it. For shame, Nikabrik. What do you say, Trufflehunter? What shall we do with it?"

"I shall give it a drink," said the first voice, presumably Trufflehunter's. A dark shape approached the bed. Caspian felt an arm slipped gently under his shoulders—if it was exactly an arm. The shape somehow seemed wrong. The face that bent toward him seemed wrong too. He got the impression that it was very hairy and very long nosed, and there were odd white patches on each side of it. "It's a mask of some sort," thought Caspian. "Or perhaps I'm in a fever and imagining it all." A cupful of something sweet and hot was set to his lips and he drank. At that moment one of the others poked the fire. A blaze sprang up and Caspian almost screamed with the shock as the sudden light revealed the face that was looking into his own. It was not a man's face but a badger's, though larger and friendlier and more intelligent than the face of any badger he had seen before. And it had certainly been talking. He saw, too, that he was on a bed of heather, in a cave. By the fire sat two little bearded men, so much wilder and shorter and hairier and thicker than Doctor Cornelius that he knew

them at once for real Dwarfs, ancient Dwarfs with not a drop of human blood in their veins. And Caspian knew that he had found the Old Narnians at last. Then his head began to swim again.



In the next few days he learned to know them by names. The Badger was called Trufflehunter; he was the oldest and kindest of the three. The Dwarf who had wanted to kill Caspian was a sour Black Dwarf (that is, his hair and beard were black, and thick and hard like horsehair). His name was Nikabrik. The other Dwarf was a Red Dwarf with hair rather like a Fox's and he was called Trumpkin.

"And now," said Nikabrik on the first evening when Caspian was well enough to sit up and talk, "we still have to decide what to do with this Human. You two think you've done it a great kindness by not letting me kill it. But I suppose the upshot is that we have to keep it a prisoner for life. I'm certainly not going to let it go alive—to go back to its own kind and betray us all."

"Bulbs and bolsters! Nikabrik," said Trumpkin. "Why need you talk so unhandsomely? It isn't the creature's fault that it bashed its head against a tree outside our hole. And I don't think it looks like a traitor."

"I say," said Caspian, "you haven't yet found out whether I *want* to go back. I don't. I want to stay with you—if you'll let me. I've been looking for people like you all my life."

"That's a likely story," growled Nikabrik. "You're a Telmarine and a Human, aren't you? Of course you want to go back to your own kind."

"Well, even if I did, I couldn't," said Caspian. "I was flying for my life when I had my accident. The King wants to kill me. If you'd killed me, you'd have done the very thing to please him."

"Well now," said Trufflehunter, "you don't say so!"

"Eh?" said Trumpkin. "What's that? What have you been doing, Human, to fall foul of Miraz at your age?"

"He's my uncle," began Caspian, when Nikabrik jumped up with his hand on his dagger.

"There you are!" he cried. "Not only a Telmarine but close kin and heir to our greatest enemy. Are you still mad enough to let this creature live?" He would have stabbed Caspian then and there, if the Badger and Trumpkin had not got in the way and forced him back to his seat and held him down.

"Now, once and for all, Nikabrik," said Trumpkin. "Will you contain yourself, or must Trufflehunter and I sit on your head?"

Nikabrik sulkily promised to behave, and the other two asked Caspian to tell his whole story. When he had done so there was a moment's silence.

"This is the queerest thing I ever heard," said Trumpkin.

"I don't like it," said Nikabrik. "I didn't know there were stories about us still told among the Humans. The less they know about us the better. That old nurse, now. She'd better have held her tongue. And it's all mixed up with that Tutor: a renegade Dwarf. I hate 'em. I hate 'em worse than the Humans. You mark my words—no good will come of it."

"Don't you go talking about things you don't understand, Nikabrik," said Trufflehunter. "You Dwarfs are as forgetful and changeable as the Humans themselves. I'm a beast, I am, and a Badger what's more. We don't change. We hold on. I say great good will come of it. This is the true King of Narnia we've got here: a true King, coming back to true Narnia. And we beasts remember, even if Dwarfs forget, that Narnia was never right except when a son of Adam was King."

"Whistles and whirligigs! Trufflehunter," said Trumpkin. "You don't mean you want to give the country to Humans?"

"I said nothing about that," answered the Badger. "It's not Men's country (who should know that better than me?) but it's a country for a man to be King of. We badgers have long enough memories to know that. Why, bless us all, wasn't the High King Peter a Man?"

"Do you believe all those old stories?" asked Trumpkin.

"I tell you, we don't change, we beasts," said Trufflehunter. "We don't forget. I believe in the High King Peter and the rest that reigned at Cair Paravel, as firmly as I believe in Aslan himself."

"As firmly as *that*, I daresay," said Trumpkin. "But who believes in Aslan nowadays?"

"I do," said Caspian. "And if I hadn't believed in him before, I would now. Back there among the Humans the people who laughed at Aslan would have laughed at stories about Talking Beasts and Dwarfs. Sometimes I did wonder if there really was such a person as Aslan: but then sometimes I wondered if there were really people like you. Yet there you are."

"That's right," said Trufflehunter. "You're right, King Caspian. And as long as you will be true to Old Narnia you shall be *my* King, whatever they say. Long life to your Majesty."

"You make me sick, Badger," growled Nikabrik. "The High King Peter and the rest may have been Men, but they were a different sort of Men. This is one of the cursed Telmarines. He has *hunted* beasts for sport. Haven't you, now?" he added, rounding suddenly on Caspian.

"Well, to tell you the truth, I have," said Caspian. "But they weren't

Talking Beasts.”

“It’s all the same thing,” said Nikabrik.

“No, no, no,” said Trufflehunter. “You know it isn’t. You know very well that the beasts in Narnia nowadays are different and are no more than the poor dumb, witless creatures you’d find in Calormen or Telmar. They’re smaller too. They’re far more different from us than the half-Dwarfs are from you.”

There was a great deal more talk, but it all ended with the agreement that Caspian should stay and even the promise that, as soon as he was able to go out, he should be taken to see what Trumpkin called “the Others”; for apparently in these wild parts all sorts of creatures from the Old Days of Narnia still lived on in hiding.

Hoofstuk 5

Kaspian se avontuur in die berge



Hierna het Kaspian en sy onderwyser nog baie geheime gesprekke bo by die groot toring gehad en met elke gesprek het Kaspian meer oor Ou Narnia geleer, sodat feitlik al sy vrye tyd gevul is met gedagtes en drome oor die Outyd, en met die begeerte dat dit sal terugkom. Maar hy het natuurlik nie baie vrye tyd nie, want sy opvoeding het nou in alle erns begin. Buiten Kosmografie, Retorika, Heraldiek, Versifikasie, en natuurlik Geskiedenis met ’n bietjie Regte, Fisika, Alchemie en Sterrekunde, moet hy leer om met ’n swaard te veg, om perd te ry, te swem en te duik, hoe om met ’n pyl en boog te skiet en op ’n fluit te speel, hoe om ’n takbok te jag en op te sny as hy dood is. Van Towerkuns leer hy net die teorie, want doktor Kornelius reken die praktiese deel is nie ’n gepaste studieveld vir prinse nie. “En ek self,” voeg hy by, “is ’n baie onbekwame towenaar wat net die kle- inste eksperimentjies kan doen.” Van Navigasie (wat volgens die doktor ’n edele en heroïese kuns is) leer hy niks, want koning Miraz keur skeep en die see nie goed nie.

Hy leer veral baie deur sy eie oë en ore te gebruik. As klein seuntjie het hy dikwels gewonder hoekom hy nie van sy tante, koningin Prunaprismia, hou nie; nou beseft hy dis omdat sy nie van hom hou nie. Hy begin ook sien dat Narnia ’n ongelukkige land is. Die belasting is hoog en die wette is streng en Miraz is ’n wrede man. Na ’n paar jaar breek ’n tyd aan waartydens dit lyk asof die koningin siek is, want daar is ’n gewoel en ’n gewerskaf om haar in die kasteel en dokters wat kom en gaan en howelinge wat fluister. Dit is vroegsomer. Een nag, te midde van al die bohaai, word Kaspian onverwags

deur doktor Kornelius wakker gemaak nadat hy net 'n paar uur in die bed was.

"Gaan ons 'n bietjie Sterrekunde doen, doktor?" vra Kaspian.

"Sjuut," sê die doktor. "Vertrou my en maak presies soos ek sê. Trek al jou klere aan; daar wag 'n lang reis op jou."

Kaspian was baie verbaas, maar hy het geleer om sy onderwyser te vertrou en maak dadelik soos vir hom ge- sê is. Toe hy aangetrek is, sê die doktor, "Ek het 'n knap- sak vir jou. Ons moet na die kamer langsaan gaan en dit vol maak met van die eetgoed wat oor is na u Hoogheid se aandete."

"My lyfbediendes sal daar wees," sê Kaspian.

"Hulle is vas aan die slaap en sal nie wakker word nie," sê die doktor. "Ek is nou wel nie 'n begaafde towe- naar nie, maar ek *kan* darem 'n slaapspreuk uitspreek."

Hulle gaan na die voorkamer en sowaar, daar sit die twee lyfbediendes op hul stoele en snork. Doktor Kornelius sny die koue oorskiethoender vinnig op en pak dit saam met 'n paar snye wildsvleis, brood en 'n paar appels en 'n flessie goeie wyn in die knapsak wat hy vir Kaspian aangee. Dit hang aan 'n band oor Kaspian se skouer, soos 'n sak waarin jy boeke skool toe dra.

"Het jy jou swaard?" vra die doktor.

"Ja," sê Kaspian.

"Hang hierdie mantel bo-oor alles om die swaard en die knapsak weg te steek. Dis reg. En nou moet ons na die groot toring gaan en praat."

Toe hulle bo in die toring kom (dis 'n bewolkte nag, glad nie soos die nag toe hulle die konjunksie van Tarva en Alambil gesien het nie), sê doktor Kornelius, "Liewe prins, jy moet hierdie kasteel onmiddellik verlaat en jou weg deur die wye wêreld baan. Jou lewe is in gevaar."

"Hoekom?" vra Kaspian.

"Omdat jy die ware koning van Narnia is: Kaspian die Tiende, die ware seun en erfgenaam van Kaspian die Negende. Mag u Majesteit lank lewe," - en skielik, tot Kaspian se verbasing, val die klein mannetjie op een knie neer en soen sy hand.

"Wat beteken dit alles? Ek verstaan nie," sê Kaspian.

"Ek is verbaas dat jy nog nie voorheen wou weet," sê die doktor, "waarom jy, as koning Kaspian se seun, nie self koning Kaspian is nie. Almal behalwe u Majesteit weet Miraz is 'n indringer. Toe hy aanvanklik begin heers het, het hy nie voorgegee om koning te wees nie. Hy het homself die beskermheer genoem. Maar toe is jou koninklike moeder oorlede, die goeie koningin en die enigste Telmareen wat ooit vir my goed was. En toe, een vir een, het die groot lords wat jou vader geken het, verdwyn of gesterf. Ook nie per toeval nie. Miraz het hulle uitgewis. Belisar en Uvilas is met pyle tydens

'n jagparty geskiet: per ongeluk, so is voorgegee. Hy het almal van die groot huis van Passarids gestuur om op die noordelike front teen reuse te veg tot hulle die een na die ander gesneeu het. Arlian en Erimon en 'n dosyn ander is op 'n vals aanklag van verraad tereggestel. Die twee broers van Bewersdam het hy mal laat verklaar en toegesluit. En uiteindelik het hy die sewe edele here, die enigstes onder die Telmarene wat nie vir die see bang was nie, oorreed om weg te seil op soek na nuwe lande anderkant die Oostelike Oseaan en hulle het, soos sy plan was, nooit weer teruggekom nie. En toe daar niemand oor was wat jou saak kon stel nie, toe het diegene wat voor hom gekruip het hom gesmeek om koning te word (soos hy hulle opdrag gegee het). En natuurlik het hy.”

“En nou wil hy my ook doodmaak?” vra Kaspian.

“Dit is feitlik seker,” sê doktor Kornelius.

“Maar hoekom nou ewe skielik?” wil Kaspian weet. “Ek bedoel, as hy wou, hoekom het hy dit nie al lank gelede gedoen nie? En watter kwaad het ek hom aangedoen?”

“Hy het van gedagte verander weens iets wat sowat twee uur gelede gebeur het. Die koningin het geboorte gegee aan 'n seun.”

“Maar wat het dit met my te doen?” vra Kaspian.

“Sien jy nie?” roep die doktor uit. “Het jy niks uit al my lesse oor Geskiedenis en Politiek geleer nie? Luister, solank hy nie kinders van sy eie gehad het nie, was hy heeltemal bereid dat jy na sy dood koning word. Dis nie omdat hy vir jou omgee nie, maar hy sal eerder dat jy op die troon sit as 'n vreemdeling. Maar noudat hy 'n seun van sy eie het, sal hy wil he sy eie seun moet die vol-gende koning wees. Jy is in die pad. Hy sal jou uit die weg ruim.”

“Is hy regtig so sleg?” vra Kaspian. “Sal hy my regtig vermoor?”

“Hy het jou vader vermoor,” sê doktor Kornelius.

Kaspian voel baie aardig en sê niks.

“Ek kan vir jou die hele storie vertel,” sê die doktor. “Maar nie nou nie. Daar is nie tyd nie. Jy moet dadelik vlug.” “Gaan jy saam met my kom?” wil Kaspian weet.

“Ek durf nie,” sê die doktor. “Dit sal jou in groter gevaar stel. Twee word makliker opgespoor as een. Liewe prins, liewe koning Kaspian, jy moet baie dapper wees. Jy moet alleen gaan, nou dadelik. Probeer om die suidelike grens oor te steek en gaan na die hof van koning Nain van Argenland. Hy sal goed wees vir jou.”

“Sal ek jou ooit weer sien?” vra Kaspian in 'n bewerige stem.

“Ek hoop so,” sê die doktor. “Watter vriend het ek in die wye wêreld

behalwe u Majesteit? En ek *het* 'n paar towermagte. Maar intussen is spoed alles. Hier is twee geskenke voor jy gaan. Dit is 'n beursie vol goud - he- laas, al die skatte in hierdie kasteel is regtens joune! En hier is iets baie beters.”

Hy sit iets in Kaspian se hande wat die seun skaars kan sien, maar hy kan dadelik voel dat dit 'n horing is.

“Dit,” sê doktor Kornelius, “is die grootste en heiligste skat in Narnia. Ek het baie gevare trotseer en baie tower- spreuke uitgespreek om dit te kry toe ek jonk was. Dit is koningin Susan se towerhoring wat sy agtergelaat het toe sy aan die einde van die Goue Tydperk uit Narnia ver- dwyn het. Daar word gesê dat wie dit ook al blaas, vreem- de hulp sal ontvang — niemand kan sê hoe vreemd nie. Dit mag die vermoë hê om vir koningin Lucy en koning Edmund en koningin Susan en hoofkoning Peter terug uit die verlede te roep sodat hulle alles kan kom regmaak. Dit kan moontlik vir Aslan self ook oproep. Neem dit, koning Kaspian, maar gebruik dit net indien jy in die grootste nood is. En nou, haas jou, haas jou, haas jou. Die klein deurtjie aan die onderkant van die toring, die deur na die tuin, is nie gesluit nie. Daar sal ons weë skei.”

“Kan ek my perd Destrier kry?” sê Kaspian.

“Hy is reeds opgesaal en wag in die hoek van die boord vir jou.”

Tydens die lang klim met die wenteltrap af ondertoe, fluister Kornelius nog baie woorde van raad en advies in sy oor. Kaspian se moed is min, maar hy probeer om alles in te neem. Dan kom die vars lug in die tuin, 'n innige handdruk van die doktor, 'n naelloop oor die gras, 'n run- nikende begroeting van Destrier en so verlaat Kaspian die Tiende die kasteel van sy vaders. Toe hy terugkyk, sien hy die vuurwerke waarmee die nuwe prins se ge- boorte gevier word.

Die hele nag lank ry hy suidwaarts en terwyl hy in 'n omgewing is wat hy ken, kies hy omweë en voetpaadjies dour woude, maar later hou hy by die hoofpad. Destrier is net so opgewonde soos sy baas oor die ongewone rit en hoewel Kaspian se oë vol tranes was toe hy vir doktor Kornelius moes groet, voel hy dapper en op 'n manier bly om te dink dat hy koning Kaspian is en uitry op soek na avontuur, met sy swaard aan sy linkersy en koningin Susan se towerhoring aan sy regter. Maar toe die dag met 'n stofreën begin, en hy om hom kyk en aan elke bant onbekende woude sien en wilde heidevelde en blou berge, besef hy hoe groot en vreemd die wêreld is en voel hy baie klein en bang.

Sodra dit helder daglig is, verlaat hy die pad en vind 'n oop, grasbegroeide plek in 'n woud waar hy kan rus. Hy haal Destrier se toom af, laat hom wei en eet 'n stuk- kie koue hoender en drink 'n bietjie wyn. 'n Rukkie later raak hy

aan die slaap. Dit is laatmiddag toe hy wakker word. Hy eet iets en sit sy reis voort, steeds suidwaarts langs afgeleë lanings. Hy is nou in 'n land van deinende heuwels wat altyd meer opas afgaan. Vanaf elke rant kan hy sien hoe die berge voor hom groter en swarter word. Teen die aand is hy by die onderste hange. Die wind kom op. Spoedig val die reën in vlae. Destrier word onrustig; daar is onweer in die lug. Hulle gaan nou 'n donker en skynbaar eindelose dennewoud binne en al die stories wat Kaspian al ooit gehoor het oor bome wat naar met mense is, flits deur sy brein. Hy onthou dat hy eint-lik 'n Telmareen is, een van die ras wat bome afkap net waar hulle kan en oorlog maak teen alles wat wild is, en hoewel hy self dalk nie soos die ander Telamarene is nie, kan 'n mens nie verwag die bome moet dit weet nie.

En hulle het ook nie. Die wind word 'n storm; die woud brul en kraak om hulle. Daar is 'n slag on 'n boom val oor die pad net agter hulle. "Stadig, Destrier, stadig!" sê Kaspian en klop sy perd teen die nek, maar hy bewee ook, want hy weet hulle het net-net aan die dood ontkom. Weerlig flits en dis of 'n groot donderslag die lug bo hul koppe in twee splits. Nou hardloop Destrier vir die vale. Kaspian is 'n goeie ruiter, maar hy is nie sterk genoeg om die perd terug te hou nie. Hy bly bo, maar tydens die wilde galop wat volg, weet hy sy lewe hang aan 'n draadjie.

Boom na boom doem voor hulle in die skemer op en word rakelings vermy. Toe, amper te skielik om seer te wees (en tog was dit seer), tref iets vir Kaspian teen die kop en hy weet niks verder nie.

Toe hy bykom, lê hy vol kneusplekke en met 'n vreeslike hoofpyn in 'n vuurverligte plek. Gedempte stemme praat naby hom.

"En nou," sê een, "moet ons besluit wat ons met hom gaan doen, voor hy wakker word."

"Maak hom dood," sê 'n ander. "Ons kan hom nie laat leef nie. Hy sal ons verrai."

"Ons moes hom dadelik doodgemaak of net daar gelos het," sê 'n derde stem. "Ons kan hom nie nou doodmaak nie. Nie nadat ons hom huis toe gebring en sy kop verbind het en alles nie. Dit is so goed as om 'n gas te vermoor."

"Menere," sê Kaspian in 'n flou stem, "wat julle ook al met my gaan doen, wees tog net goed vir my perd."

"Jou perd het laat vat lank voor ons jou gekry het," sê die eerste stem - 'n vreemde hees, aardse soort stem, dink Kaspian.

"Moenie dat hy vir julle 'n gat in die kop praat met sy mooi woordjies nie," sê die tweede stem. "Ek sê nog steeds -"

"Horings en heilbottle!" roep die derde stem uit. "Na- tuurlik gaan ons

hom nie vermoor nie. Skaam jou, Nikabrik. Wat sê jy, Truffelsoeker? Wat sal ons met hom maak?”

“Kom ons gee hom iets om te drink,” sê die eerste stem wat skynbaar Truffelsoeker s’n is. ’n Donker vorm beweeg na die bed. Kaspian voel hoe ’n arm sagkens om sy skouers glip — as dit inderdaad ’n arm is. Dit voel effens anders. Die gesig wat oor syne buk, is ook ver- keerd. Hy kry die indruk dat dit baie harig is, met ’n besonder lang neus en snaakse wit vlekke aan die kante. Dit moet een of ander masker wees, dink Kaspian. Of dalk is ek koorsig en verbeel ek my dit alles. ’n Koppie vol van iets wat soet en warm is, word teen sy lippe ge- druk en hy drink dit. Op daardie oomblik stook iemand die vuur. ’n Vlam spring op en Kaspian skree amper van skok toe die gesig wat in syne kyk skielik helder verlig word. Dis nie ’n mens nie, maar ’n ratel, hoewel groter en vriendeliker en meer intelligent as enige ratel wat hy nog ooit tevore gesien het. En dit het inderdaad gepraat. Hy sien ook dat hy op ’n bed van heide in ’n grot lê. By die vuur sit twee bebaarde mans, soveel wilder en hariger en dikker as doktor Kornelius dat hy dadelik weet hulle is egte dwerge, oeroue dwerge sonder ’n druppel mense- bloed in hul are. En Kaspian weet hy het die Ou Narnia- ne uiteindelik gevind. Toe begin sy kop weer swem.

Oor die volgende paar dae leer ken hy hul name. Die ratel word Truffelsoeker genoem; hy is die oudste en gaafste van die drie. Die, dwerg wat vir Kaspian wou doodmaak, is ’n suur swart dwerg (wel, sy hare en baard is swart en grof en hard soos perdehare). Sy naam is Nikabrik. Die ander dwerg is ’n rooi dwerg met hare baie soos ’n jakkals s’n en hy word Trumpels genoem.

“En nou,” sê Nikabrik op die eerste aand toe Kaspian gesond genoeg is om regop te sit en te praat, “moet ons nog steeds besluit wat om met hierdie mens te doen. Julie twee dink julle het hom ’n groot guns bewys toe julle nie wou toelaat dat ek hom doodmaak nie. Maar wat gaan gebeur, is dat ons hom vir die res van sy lewe gevange sal moet hou. Ek gaan hom beslis nie lewend loslaat nie - nie om terug te gaan na sy soort en ons te verraaï nie.” “Knolle en krukke, Nikabrik!” sê Trumpels. “Hoekom moet jy so genadeloos wees? Dit is nie sy skuld dat hy sy kop teen ’n boom reg voor ons gat gestamp het nie. En ek dink nie hy lyk soos ’n verraaier nie.”

“Hoor hier,” sê Kaspian, “julle weet nie eens of ek *wil* teruggaan nie. Ek wil by julle bly - as julle my sal toelaat. Ek soek al my lewe lank na mense soos julle.”

“Dis ’n goeie een,” grom Nikabrik. “Jy is ’n Telmareen en ’n mens, is jy

nie? Natuurlik wil jy na jou eie soort teruggaan.”

“Wel, selfs al wil ek, kan ek nie,” sê Kaspian. “Ek het vir my lewe gevlug toe ek die ongeluk gehad het. Die koning wil my doodmaak. As julle my doodgemaak het, sou julle hom ’n guns bewys het.”

“Sowaar?” sê Truffelsoeker. “Wat sê jy daar!”

“Hm?” sê Trumpels. “Wat’s dit? Wat het jy gedoen, mens, om Miraz se argwaan op jóú ouderdom op die hals te haal?”

“Hys my oom,” begin Kaspian en Nikabrik spring op, sy hand op sy dolk.

“Daar het julle dit!” skree hy. “Nie net ’n Telmareen nie, maar bloedfamilie van ons grootste vyand. Is julle nog steeds mal genoeg om hierdie skepsel aan die lewe te wil hou?” Hy sou Kaspian daar en dan doodgesteek het as die ratel en Trumpels nie tussenbeide getree, hom terug in sy stoel gedwing en daar vasgehou het nie.

“Vir eens en vir altyd, Nikabrik,” sê Trumpels. “Sal jy jou inhou of moet ek en Truffelsoeker op jou kop sit?”

Nikabrik belowe nors om hom te gedra en die ander twee vra vir Kaspian om die voile verhaal te vertel. Toe hy klaar is, is daar vir ’n oomblik stilte.

“Dit is die vreemdste ding wat ek nog ooit gehoor het,” sê Trumpels.

“Ek hou nie hiervan nie,” sê Nikabrik. “Ek het nie ge- weet sulke stories word nog onder die mense oor ons vertel nie. Hoe minder hulle van ons weet, hoe beter. Vat daardie ou oppasster. Sy moes eerder haar mond gehou het. En die ou onderwyser is by alles betrokke. ’n Af- vallige dwerg. Ek haat hulle. Ek haat hulle meer as die mense. Hoor wat ek sê - hier gaan niks goeds van kom nie.”

“Moet tog nie altyd oor goed praat waarvan jy niks weet nie, Nikabrik,” sê Truffelsoeker. “Julle dwerge is net so vergeetagtig en wispelturig soos die mense. Ek is ’n dier, dis wat ek is en ’n ratel op die koop toe. Ons ver- ander nie. Ons byt vas. Ek sê jou, dis die begin van groot dinge dié. Hy is die ware koning van Narnia. En ons diere onthou, selfs al vergeet dwerge, dat dit nooit goed met Narnia gegaan het behalwe toe ’n seun van Adam koning was nie.”

“Trompette en simbale, Truffelsoeker!” sê Trumpels. “Jy bedoel seker nie jy wil die land aan die mense oorgee nie?”

“Ek het glad nie so iets gesê nie,” antwoord die ratel. “Dis nie die mense se land nie (wie weet dit beter as ek?), maar ’n land vir ’n mens om koning oor te wees. Ons ratels se geheues is goed genoeg om dit te weet. Genade, was die hoofkoning Peter nie ’n mens nie?”

“Glo jy tog nie al daardie ou stories nie?” vra Trumpels.

“Ek sê jou, ons diere verander nie,” sê Truffelsoeker. “Ons vergeet nie. Ek glo net so vas in hoofkoning Peter en die res wat by Kair Paravel regeer het as in Aslan self.”

“So vas soos *dit*, wil jy nou meer,” sê Trumpels. “Maar wie glo nog deesdae in Aslan?”

“Ek,” sê Kaspian. “En as ek nie voorheen in hom geglo het nie, dan glo ek nou. Daar tussen die mense sal dié wat vir Aslan lag ook vir stories oor pratende diere en dwerge lag. Ek hét soms gewonder of daar regtig iemand soos Aslan is, maar dan het ek ook soms gewonder of daar regtig mense soos julle is. En hier is julle.”

“Dis reg,” sê Truffelsoeker. “Jy’s reg, koning Kaspian. En solank as jy aan Ou Narnia getrou is, sal jy *my* koning wees, wat hulle ook al sê. Mag u Majesteit lank lewe.”

“Jy maak my siek, ratel,” grom Nikabrik. “Die hoofkoning Peter en die res was dalk mense, maar hulle was ander soort mense. Hierdie vent is een van die vervloek- te Telmarene. Hy het diere vir die *pret* gejag. Het jy, of het jy nie?” voeg hy by en wend hom skielik tot Kaspian.

“Wel, om die waarheid te sê, ek het,” sê Kaspian. “Maar hulle was nie pratende diere nie.”

“Dis een en dieselfde ding,” sê Nikabrik.

“Nee, nee, nee,” sê Truffelsoeker. “Jy weet dit is nie. Jy weet goed die diere in Narnia is deesdae anders, nie veel anders nie as die arme stom dom wesens wat ’n mens in Kalormen en Telmar kry. Hulle is kleiner ook. Hulle verskil baie meer van ons as wat die halfdwerg van jou verskil.”

Daar word nog lank gepraat, maar dit eindig alles met die ooreenkoms dat Kaspian moet bly en selfs die belofte dat, sodra hy in staat is om buitentoe te gaan, hulle hom moet neem om dit wat Trumpels “die ander” noem, te sien; want skynbaar skuil daar in hierdie wilde dele nog steeds allerhande soorte wesens uit Narnia se Outyd.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PEOPLE THAT LIVED IN HIDING

NOW BEGAN THE HAPPIEST TIMES THAT Caspian had ever known. On a fine summer morning when the dew lay on the grass he set off with the Badger and the two Dwarfs, up through the forest to a high saddle in the mountains and down onto their sunny southern slopes where one looked across the green wolds of Archenland.

"We will go first to the Three Bulgy Bears," said Trumpkin.

They came in a glade to an old hollow oak tree covered with moss, and Trufflehunter tapped with his paw three times on the trunk and there was no answer. Then he tapped again and a woolly sort of voice from inside said, "Go away. It's not time to get up yet." But when he tapped the third time there was a noise like a small earthquake from inside and a sort of door opened and out came three brown bears, very bulgy indeed and blinking their little eyes. And when everything had been explained to them (which took a long time because they were so sleepy) they said, just as Trufflehunter had said, that a son of Adam ought to be King of Narnia and all kissed Caspian—very wet, snuffly kisses they were—and offered him some honey. Caspian did not really want honey, without bread, at that time in the morning, but he thought it polite to accept. It took him a long time afterward to get unsticky.



After that they went on till they came among tall beech trees and Trufflehunter called out, "Pattertwig! Pattertwig! Pattertwig!" and almost at once, bounding down from branch to branch till he was just above their heads, came the most magnificent red squirrel that Caspian had ever seen. He was far bigger than the ordinary dumb squirrels which he had sometimes seen in the castle gardens; indeed he was nearly the size of a terrier and the moment you looked in his face you saw that he could talk.



Indeed the difficulty was to get him to stop talking, for, like all squirrels, he was a chatterer. He welcomed Caspian at once and asked if he would like a nut and Caspian said thanks, he would. But as Pattertwig went bounding away to fetch it, Trufflehunter whispered in Caspian's ear, "Don't look. Look the other way. It's very bad manners among squirrels to watch anyone going to his store or to look as if you wanted to know where it was." Then Pattertwig came back with the nut and Caspian ate it and after that Pattertwig asked if he could take any messages to other friends. "For I can go nearly everywhere without setting foot to ground," he said. Trufflehunter and the Dwarfs thought this a very good idea and gave Pattertwig messages to all sorts of people with queer names telling them all to come to a feast and council on Dancing Lawn at mid-night three nights ahead. "And you'd better tell the three Bulgies too," added Trumpkin. "We forgot to mention it to them."

Their next visit was to the Seven Brothers of Shuddering Wood. Trumpkin led the way back to the saddle and then down eastward on the northern slope of the mountains till they came to a very solemn place among rocks and fir trees. They went very quietly and presently Caspian could feel the ground shake under his feet as if someone were hammering down below. Trumpkin went to a flat stone about the size of the top of a waterbutt, and stamped on it with his foot. After a long pause it was moved away by someone or something underneath, and there was a dark, round hole with a good deal of heat and steam coming out of it and in the middle of the hole the head of a Dwarf very like Trumpkin himself. There was a long talk here and the dwarf seemed more suspicious than the Squirrel or the Bulgy Bears had been, but in the end the whole party were invited to come down. Caspian found himself descending a dark stairway into the earth, but when he came to the bottom he saw firelight. It was the light of a furnace. The whole place was a smithy. A subterranean stream ran past on one side of it. Two Dwarfs were at the bellows, another was holding a piece of red-hot metal on the anvil with a pair of tongs, a fourth was hammering it, and two, wiping their horny little hands on a greasy cloth, were coming forward to meet the visitors. It took some

time to satisfy them that Caspian was a friend and not an enemy, but when they did, they all cried—"Long live the King," and their gifts were noble—mail shirts and helmets and swords for Caspian and Trumpkin and Nikabrik. The Badger could have had the same if he had liked, but he said he was a beast, he was, and if his claws and teeth could not keep his skin whole, it wasn't worth keeping. The workmanship of the arms was far finer than any Caspian had ever seen, and he gladly accepted the Dwarf-made sword instead of his own, which looked, in comparison, as feeble as a toy and as clumsy as a stick. The seven brothers (who were all Red Dwarfs) promised to come to the feast at Dancing Lawn.

A little farther on, in a dry, rocky ravine they reached the cave of five Black Dwarfs. They looked suspiciously at Caspian, but in the end the eldest of them said, "If he is against Miraz, well have him for King." And the next oldest said, "Shall we go farther up for you, up to the crags? There's an Ogre or two and a Hag that we could introduce you to, up there."

"Certainly not," said Caspian.

"I should think not, indeed," said Trufflehunter. "We want none of that sort on our side." Nikabrik disagreed with this, but Trumpkin and the Badger overruled him. It gave Caspian a shock to realize that the horrible creatures out of the old stories, as well as the nice ones, had some descendants in Narnia still.

"We should not have Aslan for friend if we brought in *that* rabble," said Trufflehunter as they came away from the cave of the Black Dwarfs.

"Oh, Aslan!" said Trumpkin, cheerily but contemptuously. "What matters much more is that you wouldn't have me."

"Do *you* believe in Aslan?" said Caspian to Nikabrik.

"I'll believe in anyone or anything," said Nikabrik, "that'll batter these cursed Telmarine barbarians to pieces or drive them out of Narnia. Anyone or anything, Aslan *or* the White Witch, do you understand?"

"Silence, silence," said Trufflehunter. "You do not know what you are saying. She was a worse enemy than Miraz and all his race."

"Not to Dwarfs, she wasn't," said Nikabrik.

Their next visit was a pleasanter one. As they came lower down, the mountains opened out into a great glen or wooded gorge with a swift river running at the bottom. The open places near the river's edge were a mass of foxgloves and wild roses and the air was buzzing with bees. Here Trufflehunter called again, "Glenstorm! Glenstorm!" and after a pause Caspian heard the sound of hoofs. It grew louder till the valley trembled and at last, breaking and trampling the thickets, there came in sight the noblest creatures that Caspian had yet seen, the great Centaur Glenstorm and his three sons. His flanks were glossy

chestnut and the beard that covered his broad chest was golden-red. He was a prophet and a star-gazer and knew what they had come about.

"Long live the King," he cried. "I and my sons are ready for war. When is the battle to be joined?"

Up till now neither Caspian nor the others had really been thinking of a war. They had some vague idea, perhaps, of an occasional raid on some Human farmstead or of attacking a party of hunters, if it ventured too far into these southern wilds. But, in the main, they had thought only of living to themselves in woods and caves and building up an attempt at Old Narnia in hiding. As soon as Glenstorm had spoken everyone felt much more serious.

"Do you mean a real war to drive Miraz out of Narnia?" asked Caspian.

"What else?" said the Centaur. "Why else does your Majesty go clad in mail and girt with sword?"

"Is it possible, Glenstorm?" said the Badger.

"The time is ripe," said Glenstorm. "I watch the skies, Badger, for it is mine to watch, as it is yours to remember. Tarva and Alambil have met in the halls of high heaven, and on earth a son of Adam has once more arisen to rule and name the creatures. The hour has struck. Our council at the Dancing Lawn must be a council of war." He spoke in such a voice that neither Caspian nor the others hesitated for a moment: it now seemed to them quite possible that they might win a war and quite certain that they must wage one.

As it was now past the middle of the day, they rested with the Centaurs and ate such food as the centaurs provided—cakes of oaten meal, and apples, and herbs, and wine, and cheese.

The next place they were to visit was quite near at hand, but they had to go a long way round in order to avoid a region in which Men lived. It was well into the afternoon before they found themselves in level fields, warm between hedgerows. There Trufflehunter called at the mouth of a little hole in a green bank and out popped the last thing Caspian expected—a Talking Mouse. He was of course bigger than a common mouse, well over a foot high when he stood on his hind legs, and with ears nearly as long as (though broader than) a rabbit's. His name was Reepicheep and he was a gay and martial mouse. He wore a tiny little rapier at his side and twirled his long whiskers as if they were a moustache. "There are twelve of us, Sire," he said with a dashing and graceful bow, "and I place all the resources of my people unreservedly at your Majesty's disposal." Caspian tried hard (and unsuccessfully) not to laugh, but he couldn't help thinking that Reepicheep and all his people could very easily be put in a washing basket and carried home on one's back.

It would take too long to mention all the creatures whom Caspian met that day—Clodsley Shovel the Mole, the three Hardbiters (who were badgers like Trufflehunter), Camillo the Hare, and Hogglegstock the Hedgehog. They rested at last beside a well at the edge of a wide and level circle of grass, bordered with tall elms which now threw long shadows across it, for the sun was setting, the daisies closing, and the rooks flying home to bed. Here they supped on food they had brought with them and Trumpkin lit his pipe (Nikabrik was not a smoker).

“Now,” said the Badger, “if only we could wake the spirits of these trees and this well, we should have done a good day’s work.”

“Can’t we?” said Caspian.

“No,” said Trufflehunter. “We have no power over them. Since the Humans came into the land, felling forests and defiling streams, the Dryads and Naiads have sunk into a deep sleep. Who knows if ever they will stir again? And that is a great loss to our side. The Telmarines are horribly afraid of the woods, and once the Trees moved in anger, our enemies would go mad with fright and be chased out of Narnia as quick as their legs could carry them.”



“What imaginations you Animals have!” said Trumpkin, who didn’t believe in such things. “But why stop at Trees and Waters? Wouldn’t it be even nicer if the stones started throwing themselves at old Miraz?”

The Badger only grunted at this, and after that there was such a silence that Caspian had nearly dropped off to sleep when he thought he heard a faint musical sound from the depth of the woods at his back. Then he thought it was only a dream and turned over again; but as soon as his ear touched the ground he felt or heard (it was hard to tell which) a faint beating or drumming. He raised his head. The beating noise at once became fainter, but the music returned, clearer this time. It was like flutes. He saw that Trufflehunter was sitting up staring into the wood. The moon was bright; Caspian had been asleep longer than he thought. Nearer and nearer came the music, a tune wild and yet dreamy, and the noise of many light feet, till at last, out from the wood into the moonlight, came dancing shapes such as Caspian had been thinking of all his life. They were not much taller than dwarfs, but far slighter and more graceful. Their curly heads had little horns, the upper part of their bodies gleamed naked in the pale light, but their legs and feet were those of goats.

“Fauns!” cried Caspian, jumping up, and in a moment they were all round him. It took next to no time to explain the whole situation to them and they accepted Caspian at once. Before he knew what he was doing he found himself joining in the dance. Trumpkin, with heavier and jerkier movements, did likewise and even Trufflehunter hopped and lumbered about as best he could. Only Nikabrik stayed where he was, looking on in silence. The Fauns footed it all round Caspian to their reedy pipes. Their strange faces, which seemed mournful and merry all at once, looked into his; dozens of Fauns, Mentius and Obentinus and Dumnus, Voluns, Voltinus, Girbius, Nimienus, Nausus, and Oscuns. Pattertwig had sent them all.

When Caspian awoke next morning he could hardly believe that it had not all been a dream; but the grass was covered with little cloven hoofmarks.



Die mense wat wegkruip



Nou begin die gelukkigste tyd wat Kaspian nog ooit beleef het. Op 'n mooi someroggend toe die dou op die gras lê, gaan hy saam met die ratel en die twee dwerge opwaarts deur die woud na 'n hoë saal in die berge en afwaarts na die sonnige suidelike hange van waar 'n mens oor die groen valleie van Argenland kan *kyk*.

“Ons gaan heel eerste na die drie boepensbere toe,” sê Trumpels.

Hulle kom in 'n oopte waar 'n ou hol, mosbedekte eikeboom staan en Truffelsoeker klop drie keer met sy poot teen die stam, maar daar is geen antwoord nie. Toe klop hy weer en 'n wollerige soort stem sê van binne af, “Gaan weg. Dis nog nie tyd om op te staan nie.” Maar toe hy die derde keer klop, kom daar 'n geluid soos 'n klein aardbewinkie van binne af en 'n soort deur gaan oop en drie bruin boepensbere kom met knippende oë uit. En toe alles vir hulle verduidelik is (wat lank neem om- dat hulle so slaperig is), sê hulle, net soos Truffelsoeker gesê het, dat 'n seun van Adam koning van Narnia moet wees en almal soen vir Kaspian — baie nat, snuffelrige soene - en bied vir hom heuning aan. Kaspian is nie juis hierdie tyd van die oggend lus vir heuning sonder brood nie, maar hy wil nie aanstoot gee nie. Na die tyd sukkel hy lank om van die taaiheid ontslae te raak. Hierna gaan hulle verder tot hulle tussen hoë beuke- bome kom waar Truffelsoeker, “Trippeltakkies! Trippel- takkies! Trippeltakkies!” roep en amper onmiddellik kom die mooiste rooi eekhorning wat Kaspian nog ooit gesien het van tak tot tak aangehuppel tot hy reg bo hul koppe is. Hy is baie groter as die gewone stom eekhorings wat Kaspian soms in die kasteel se tuine gesien het; hy is inderdaad amper so groot soos 'n terrier en die oomblik dat jy in sy gesig kyk, weet jy hy kan praat. Die pro- bleem is dan ook om hom te laat ophou praat, want soos alle eekhorings is hy 'n babbelaar. Hy verwelkom Kaspian dadelik en vra of hy 'n neut wil hê en Kaspian sê ja dankie, dit sal lekker wees. Maar terwyl Trippeltakkies wegskarrel om dit te gaan haal, fluister Truffel- soeker in Kaspian se oor, “Moenie kyk nie. Kyk ander- pad. Dis baie slegte maniere onder eekhorings om ie- mand dop te hou wat na sy spens gaan, of om te lyk asof jy wil weet waar dit is.” Toe kom Trippeltakkies terug met die neut en Kaspian eet dit en daarna vra Trippel-

takkies of hy enige boodskappe na sy an- der vriende kan neem. “Want ek kan feitlik enige plek gaan sonder om voet op die grond te sit,” sê hy.

Truffelsoeker en die dwer- ge dink dis 'n baie goeie voorstel en gee vir Trippeltakkies boodskappe vir allerhande soorte mense met eienaar- dige name waarin hulle aangesê word om oor drie dae om middernag na 'n fees en raadsvergadering by die Dansgras te kom. “En jy moet vir die drie boepense ook sê,” voeg Truffelsoeker by. “Ons het vergeet om dit vir hulle te noem.”

Hul volgende besoek is aan die sewe broers van die Sidderende Woud. Trumpets loop vooruit na die saal en toe ooswaarts langs die noordelike hange tot hulle by 'n baie somber plek tussen rotse en dennebome kom. Hulle beweeg geluidloos en na 'n rukkie voel Kaspian hoe die grond onder sy voete skud asof iemand daar onder hard aan die kap is. Trumpels gaan na 'n plat klip wat omtrent so groot soos die bokant van 'n watervaatjie is en stamp met sy voet daarop. Na 'n lang stilte word dit deur iets of iemand aan die onderkant weggestoot en daar is 'n donker, ronde gat waaruit stoom en hitte opslaan en in die middel van die gat is die kop van 'n dwerg wat baie soos Trumpels lyk. Daar word lank gepraat en die dwerg klink nog baie agterdogtiger as die eekhoring of die boepensbere, maar op die ou end word die hele geselskap ondertoe genooi. Kaspian daal met 'n donker stel trappe af die aarde in, maar toe hy onder kom, sien hy 'n gloed.

Dit is 'n vuurherd se lig. Die hele plek is 'n smidswinkel en 'n ondergrondse rivier loop aan die een kant verby. Twee dwerge is besig met die blaasbalk, 'n ander een hou 'n stuk rooiwarm metaal met 'n tang op 'n aambeeld vas, terwyl 'n vierde dit met 'n hamer slaan en twee ander nader kom om die besoekers te groet nadat hulle hul skurwe hande aan 'n vetterige lap afgevee het. Dit neem 'n rukkie om hulle te oortuig Kaspian is 'n vriend en nie 'n vyand nie, maar toe hulle oortuig is, roep almal, “Lank lewe die koning!” en hul geskenke is adellik van aard: maliekoldertunieke en helms en swaarde vir Kaspian en Trumpels en Nikabrik. Die ratel kon ook gekry het as hy wou hê, maar hy sê hy is 'n dier en as sy kloue en tande nie sy vel kan heel hou nie, dan weet hy nie. Die vak- manskap waarmee die wapens gemaak is, is die beste wat Kaspian nog ooit gesien het, en hy ontvang die dwergge- maakte swaard met graagte in die plek van sy eie, wat in kontras so verpot soos 'n speelding en so lomp soos 'n stok lyk. Die sewe broers (wat almal rooi dwerge is) be- loof om na die fees by die Dansgras te kom.

'n Entjie verder in 'n droë, rotsagtige skeur kom hulle op die vyf swart dwerge se grot af. Die dwerge staar agterdogtig na Kaspian, maar op die ou end sê die oud- ste een, “As hy teen Miraz is, sal ons hom as koning aan- vaar.” En die tweede oudste sê, “Sal ons verder teen die kranse opgaan? Daar bo is 'n paar paaiboelies en 'n ou heks aan wie ons julle kan voorstel.”

“Beslis nie,” sê Kaspian.

“Natuurlik nie,” sê Truffelsoeker. “Ons wil nie van daardie soort aan ons kant hê nie.” Nikabrik stem nie hiermee saam nie, maar Trumpels en die ratel praat hom dood. Kaspian besef met ’n skok dat die walglike wesens uit die ou stories, sowel as die goeies, afstammelinge in Narnia het.

“Ons sal nie vir Aslan as vriend hê as ons *daardie* skorriemorries insleep nie,” sê Truffelsoeker toe hulle van die swart dwerge se grot af wegstap.

“Ag, Aslan!” sê Trumpels uitgelate maar minagtend.

“Wat baie meer saak maak, is dat julle nie vir my sal hê nie.”

“Glo jy in Aslan?” vra Kaspian vir Nikabrik.

“Ek sal in enigiets en enigiemand glo,” sê Nikabrik, “wat daardie vervloekte Telmareense barbare uitmekaar sal slaan en uit Narnia verdryf. Enigeen of enigiets, Aslan of Wit Heks, het jy my?”

“Stilte, stilte,” sê Truffelsoeker. “Jy weet nie wat jy sê nie. Sy was ’n erger vyand as Miraz en al sy gespuis.”

“Nie vir die dwerge nie,” sê Nikabrik.

Hul volgende besoek is aansienlik lekkerder. Soos hulle daal, gaan die berge oop in ’n groot vallei of beboste laagte met ’n vinnige rivier wat onderin vloei. Die oop plekke naby die rivierwal is ’n massa vingerhoedjies en wilde rose en die lug gons van die bye. Hier roep Truffelsoeker weer, “Glenstorm! Glenstorm!” en na ’n rukkie hoor Kaspian die geluid van hoewe. Dit word harder tot die vallei daarvan bewe en uiteindelik, met takke wat onder hul’ trappelende hoewe breek en kraak, verskyn die edelste wesens wat Kaspian nog ooit gesien het: die groot sentour Glenstorm en sy drie seuns. Sy flanke is ’n glansende rooibruin en die baard wat oor sy breë borskas val, is goudrooi. Hy is ’n profeet en ’n sterrekyker en het geweet hulle is op pad.

“Lank lewe die koning!” roep hy uit. “Ek en my seuns is gereed vir die stryd. Wanneer kan ons by julle aansluit?”

Tot nou toe het nóg Kaspian, nóg enige van die ander aan oorlog gedink. Hulle het dalk ’n vae idee gehad van enkele strooptogte op iemand se plaas of aanvalle op jaggeselskappe wat te na aan die suidelike woesteny kom. Maar in die algemeen het hulle eerder gedink hoe hulle op hul eie in die woude en grotte gaan skuil en probeer om Ou Narnia te laat herleef. Nadat Glenstorm gepraat het, voel almal baie ernstiger.

“Bedoel jy ’n regte oorlog om Miraz uit Narnia te verdryf?” vra Kaspian.

“Wat anders?” sê die sentour. “Hoekom anders dra u Majesteit maliekolder en is omgord met ’n swaard?”

“Is dit moontlik, Glenstorm?” vra die ratel.

“Die tyd is ryp,” antwoord Glenstorm. “Ek hou die hemele dop, ratel, want dis myne om na te kyk soos dit joune is om te onthou. Tarva en Alambil

het in die hoog- ste hemele se sale vergader en op aarde het 'n seun van Adam weer eens opgestaan om te heers en die diere name te gee. Die uur het geslaan. Ons raadsvergadering by die Dansgras moet 'n krygsvergadering wees." Hy praat in so 'n stem dat nóg Kaspian, nóg enige van die ander 'n oomblik huiwer: dit klink nou vir hulle heeltemal moontlik dat hulle 'n oorlog kan wen en heeltemal seker dat hulle een gaan voer.

Aangesien dit nou reeds namiddag is, rus hulle saam met die sentours en eet van die kos wat die sentours vir hulle gee: hawermeelkoeke en appels en kruie en wyn en kaas.

Die volgende plek wat hulle besoek, is baie naby, maar hulle moet 'n lang ompad neem om 'n deel waar mense woon, te vermy. Dit is laatmiddag voor hulle hul in gelyk velde knus tussen heinings bevind. Daar roep Truffelsoeker by die mond van 'n klein gaatjie teen 'n groen wal, en wat wip uit? Die laaste ding wat Kaspian verwag het — 'n pratende muis. Hy is natuurlik groter as 'n gewone muis, meer as 'n voet lank as hy op sy agterbene staan en met ore amper so lank soos (hoewel breër as) 'n haas. Sy naam is Riepetjiep en hy is 'n vrolike en militaristiese muis. Hy dra 'n klein rapier aan sy sy en sy snorbaarde is soos 'n moestas gedraai.

"Daar is twaalf van ons, Majesteit," sê hy met 'n swie- rige en grasierige buiging, "en ek plaas al my mense se hulpbronne sonder voorbehoud tot u Majesteit se beskik- king."

Kaspian probeer hard (en slaag daarin) om nie te lag nie, maar hy kan nie help om te dink dat Riepetjiep en al sy mense baie maklik in 'n wasgoedmandjie op iemand se rug weggedra kan word nie.

Dit sal te lank neem om al die wesens wat Kaspian daardie dag ontmoet het, op te noem — Kluiten Skoffel die mol, die drie Vasbyters (wat ratels soos Truffelsoeker is), Kamillo die haas en Prikkelprop die krimpvarkie.

Hulle rus uiteindelik by 'n put aan die kant van 'n groot en gelyk kring gras omsoom deur hoë olms wat lang skaduwees daaroor gooi, want die son is besig om onder te gaan, die gousblomme is aan die toegaan en die kraaie vlieg huis toe om te gaan slaap. Hier eet hulle van die kos wat hulle saamgebring het en Trumpels steek sy pyp op (Nikabrik is nie 'n roker nie).

"Reg," sê die ratel, "as ons nou nog net hierdie bome en dié put se geeste kan wakker maak, het ons 'n goeie dag se werk gedoen."

"Kan ons nie?" sê Kaspian.

"Nee," sê Truffelsoeker. "Ons het geen mag oor hulle nie. Vandat die mense die land binnegekom en bome af- gekap en riviere besoedel het, het die bosnimfe en water- nimfe in 'n diep slaap verval. Wie weet of hulle ooit weer sal wakker word? En dis 'n groot verlies vir ons kant. Die Telmarene is

ontsettend bang vir die woude en as die bome in woede sou opruk, sal ons vyand mal word van vrees en so vinnig as hul bene hul kan dra uit Narnia padgee.”

“Watter verbeelding het julle diere nie!” sê Trumpels wat nie in sulke goed glo nie. “Maar hoekom by bome en water ophou? Sal dit nie nog lekkerder wees as die klippe hulself na ou Miraz begin slinger nie?”

Hierop snork die ratel bloot, en daarna heers daar so ’n stilte dat Kaspian amper aan die slaap raak. Skielik verbeel hy hom hy hoor die gedempte geluid van musiek uit die dieptes van die woud agter hom. Hy dink egter dis net ’n droom en draai weer om, maar so gou soos sy oor aan die grond raak, voel of hoor hy (dit is moeilik om te sê wat) dowwe slae of ’n getrommel. Hy lig sy kop. Die slaggeluid word dadelik dowwer, maar die musiek is nog daar, hierdie keer duideliker. Dit klink soos fluite. Hy sien Truffelsoeker sit regop en staar na die woud. Die maan is helder; Kaspian het langer geslaap as wat hy gedink het. Nader en nader kom die musiek, ’n wilde en tog dromerige wysie, en die geluid van baie ligte voete, tot die dansende vorms waaraan Kaspian nog sy lewe lank dink, ’n rukkies later uit die woud in die maanlig ver- skyn. Hulle is nie veel langer as dwerge nie, maar baie fyner en meer grasieus. Hul krulkoppe het klein horin- kies, hul naakte bolywe glinster in die bleek lig, maar hul bene en voete is dié van bokke.

“Faune!” roep Kaspian uit. Hy spring op en binne oomblikke is hulle om hom. In ’n japtrap is die hele situa- sie aan hulle verduidelik en hulle aanvaar Kaspian on- middellik. Voor hy mooi weet wat hy doen, is hy saam met hulle aan die dans. Trumpels, met swaarder en meer rukkerige bewegings, doen ook mee en selfs Truffelsoe- ker hop en trap rond so goed as wat hy kan. Net Nika- brik bly waar hy is en kyk in stilte toe. Die faune hup- pel op die maat van hul rietfluite, al om Kaspian. Hul vreemde gesigte wat tegelykertyd hartseer en vrolik lyk, staar in syne. Daar is dosyne van hulle: Mentius en Obentinus en Dumnus, Voluns, Voltinus, Girbius, Nimie- nus, Nausus en Oskuns. Trippeltakkies het hulle almal gestuur.

Toe Kaspian die volgende oggend wakker word, kan hy skaars glo alles was nie 'n droom nie, maar die gras is vol gesplete hoefmerkies.

CHAPTER SEVEN

OLD NARNIA IN DANGER

THE PLACE WHERE THEY HAD MET THE Fauns was, of course, Dancing Lawn itself, and here Caspian and his friends remained till the night of the great Council. To sleep under the stars, to drink nothing but well water and to live chiefly on nuts and wild fruit, was a strange experience for Caspian after his bed with silken sheets in a tapestried chamber at the castle, with meals laid out on gold and silver dishes in the anteroom, and attendants ready at his call. But he had never enjoyed himself more. Never had sleep been more refreshing nor food tasted more savory, and he began already to harden and his face wore a kinglier look.

When the great night came, and his various strange subjects came stealing into the lawn by ones and twos and threes or by sixes and sevens—the moon then shining almost at her full—his heart swelled as he saw their numbers and heard their greetings. All whom he had met were there: Bulgy Bears and Red Dwarfs and Black Dwarfs, Moles and Badgers, Hares and Hedgehogs, and others whom he had not yet seen—five Satyrs as red as foxes, the whole contingent of Talking Mice, armed to the teeth and following a shrill trumpet, some Owls, the Old Raven of Ravenscaur. Last of all (and this took Caspian's breath away), with the Centaurs came a small but genuine Giant, Wimbleweather of Deadman's Hill, carrying on his back a basketful of rather sea-sick Dwarfs who had accepted his offer of a lift and were now wishing they had walked instead.

The Bulgy Bears were very anxious to have the feast first and leave the council till afterward: perhaps till tomorrow. Reepicheep and his Mice said that councils and feasts could both wait, and proposed storming Miraz in his own castle that very night. Pattertwig and the other Squirrels said they could talk and eat at the same time, so why not have the council and feast all at once? The Moles proposed throwing up entrenchments round the Lawn before they did anything else. The Fauns thought it would be better to begin with a solemn dance. The Old Raven, while agreeing with the Bears that it would take too long to have a full council before supper, begged to be allowed to give a brief address to the whole company. But Caspian and the Centaurs and the Dwarfs overruled all these suggestions and insisted on holding a real council of war at once.

When all the other creatures had been persuaded to sit down quietly in a great circle, and when (with more difficulty) they had got Pattertwig to stop running to and fro and saying "Silence! Silence, everyone, for the King's speech," Caspian, feeling a little nervous, got up. "Narnians!" he began, but he never got any further, for at that very

moment Camillo the Hare said, "Hush! There's a Man somewhere near."

They were all creatures of the wild, accustomed to being hunted, and they all became still as statues. The beasts all turned their noses in the direction which Camillo had indicated.

"Smells like Man and yet not quite like Man," whispered Trufflehunter.

"It's getting steadily nearer," said Camillo.

"Two badgers and you three Dwarfs, with your bows at the ready, go softly off to meet it," said Caspian.

"We'll settle 'un," said a Black Dwarf grimly, fitting a shaft to his bowstring.

"Don't shoot if it is alone," said Caspian. "Catch it."

"Why?" asked the Dwarf.

"Do as you're told," said Glenstorm the Centaur.

Everyone waited in silence while the three Dwarfs and two Badgers trotted stealthily across to the trees on the northwest side of the Lawn. Then came a sharp dwarfish cry, "Stop! Who goes there?" and a sudden spring. A moment later a voice, which Caspian knew well, could be heard saying, "All right, all right, I'm unarmed. Take my wrists if you like, worthy Badgers, but don't bite right through them. I want to speak to the King."



"Doctor Cornelius!" cried Caspian with joy, and rushed forward to greet his old tutor. Everyone else crowded round.

"Pah!" said Nikabrik. "A renegade Dwarf. A half-and-halfer! Shall I pass my sword through its throat?"

"Be quiet, Nikabrik," said Trumpkin. "The creature can't help its

ancestry.”

“This is my greatest friend and the savior of my life,” said Caspian. “And anyone who doesn’t like his company may leave my army: at once. Dearest doctor, I *am* glad to see you again. How ever did you find us out?”

“By a little use of simple magic, your Majesty,” said the Doctor, who was still puffing and blowing from having walked so fast. “But there’s no time to go into that now. We must all fly from this place at once. You are already betrayed and Miraz is on the move. Before midday tomorrow you will be surrounded.”

“Betrayed!” said Caspian. “And by whom?”

“Another renegade Dwarf, no doubt,” said Nikabrik.

“By your horse Destrier,” said Doctor Cornelius. “The poor brute knew no better. When you were knocked off, of course, he went dawdling back to his stable in the castle. Then the secret of your flight was known. I made myself scarce, having no wish to be questioned about it in Miraz’s torture chamber. I had a pretty good guess from my crystal as to where I should find you. But all day—that was the day before yesterday—I saw Miraz’s tracking parties out in the woods. Yesterday I learned that his army is out. I don’t think some of your—um—pure-blooded Dwarfs have as much woodcraft as might be expected. You’ve left tracks all over the place. Great carelessness. At any rate something has warned Miraz that Old Narnia is not so dead as he had hoped, and he is on the move.”

“Hurrah!” said a very shrill and small voice from somewhere at the Doctor’s feet. “Let them come! All I ask is that the King will put me and my people in the front.”

“What on earth?” said Doctor Cornelius. “Has your Majesty got grasshoppers—or mosquitoes—in your army?” Then after stooping down and peering carefully through his spectacles, he broke into a laugh.

“By the Lion,” he swore, “it’s a mouse. Signior Mouse, I desire your better acquaintance. I am honored by meeting so valiant a beast.”

“My friendship you shall have, learned Man,” piped Reepicheep. “And any Dwarf—or Giant—in the army who does not give you good language shall have my sword to reckon with.”

“Is there time for this foolery?” asked Nikabrik. “What are our plans? Battle or flight?”

“Battle if need be,” said Trumpkin. “But we are hardly ready for it yet, and this is no very defensible place.”

“I don’t like the idea of running away,” said Caspian.

“Hear him! Hear him!” said the Bulgy Bears. “Whatever we do, don’t let’s have any *running*. Especially not before supper; and not too soon after it neither.”

"Those who run first do not always run last," said the Centaur. "And why should we let the enemy choose our position instead of choosing it ourselves? Let us find a strong place."

"That's wise, your Majesty, that's wise," said Trufflehunter.

"But where are we to go?" asked several voices.

"Your Majesty," said Doctor Cornelius, "and all you variety of creatures, I think we must fly east and down the river to the great woods. The Telmarines hate that region. They have always been afraid of the sea and of something that may come over the sea. That is why they have let the great woods grow up. If traditions speak true, the ancient Cair Paravel was at the river-mouth. All that part is friendly to us and hateful to our enemies. We must go to Aslan's How."

"Aslan's How?" said several voices. "We do not know what it is."

"It lies within the skirts of the Great Woods and it is a huge mound which Narnians raised in very ancient times over a very magical place, where there stood—and perhaps still stands—a very magical Stone. The Mound is all hollowed out within into galleries and caves, and the Stone is in the central cave of all. There is room in the mound for all our stores, and those of us who have most need of cover and are most accustomed to underground life can be lodged in the caves. The rest of us can lie in the wood. At a pinch all of us (except this worthy Giant) could retreat into the Mound itself, and there we should be beyond the reach of every danger except famine."

"It is a good thing we have a learned man among us," said Trufflehunter; but Trumpkin muttered under his breath, "Soup and celery! I wish our leaders would think less about these old wives' tales and more about victuals and arms." But all approved of Cornelius's proposal and that very night, half an hour later, they were on the march. Before sunrise they arrived at Aslan's How.

It was certainly an awesome place, a round green hill on top of another hill, long since grown over with trees, and one little, low doorway leading into it. The tunnels inside were a perfect maze till you got to know them, and they were lined and roofed with smooth stones, and on the stones, peering in the twilight, Caspian saw strange characters and snaky patterns, and pictures in which the form of a Lion was repeated again and again. It all seemed to belong to an even older Narnia than the Narnia of which his nurse had told him.

It was after they had taken up their quarters in and around the How that fortune began to turn against them. King Miraz's scouts soon found their new lair, and he and his army arrived on the edge of the woods. And as so often happens, the enemy turned out stronger than they had reckoned. Caspian's heart sank as he saw company after company arriving. And though Miraz's men may have been afraid of going into the wood, they were even more afraid of Miraz, and with him

in command they carried battle deeply into it and sometimes almost to the How itself. Caspian and other captains of course made many sorties into the open country. Thus there was fighting on most days and sometimes by night as well; but Caspian's party had on the whole the worst of it.

At last there came a night when everything had gone as badly as possible, and the rain which had been falling heavily all day had ceased at nightfall only to give place to raw cold. That morning Caspian had arranged what was his biggest battle yet, and all had hung their hopes on it. He, with most of the Dwarfs, was to have fallen on the King's right wing at daybreak, and then, when they were heavily engaged, Giant Wimbleweather, with the Centaurs and some of the fiercest beasts, was to have broken out from another place and endeavored to cut the King's right off from the rest of the army. But it had all failed. No one had warned Caspian (because no one in these later days of Narnia remembered) that Giants are not at all clever. Poor Wimbleweather, though as brave as a lion, was a true Giant in that respect. He had broken out at the wrong time and from the wrong place, and both his party and Caspian's had suffered badly and done the enemy little harm. The best of the Bears had been hurt, a Centaur terribly wounded, and there were few in Caspian's party who had not lost blood. It was a gloomy company that huddled under the dripping trees to eat their scanty supper.



The gloomiest of all was Giant Wimbleweather. He knew it was all his fault. He sat in silence shedding big tears which collected on the end of his nose and then fell off with a huge splash on the whole bivouac of the Mice, who had just been beginning to get warm and drowsy. They all jumped up, shaking the water out of their ears and wringing their little blankets, and asked the Giant in shrill but forcible voices whether he thought they weren't wet enough without this sort of thing. And then other people woke up and told the Mice they had been enrolled as scouts and not as a concert party, and asked why they couldn't keep quiet. And Wimbleweather tiptoed away to find some place where he could be miserable in peace and stepped on somebody's tail and somebody (they said afterward it was a fox) bit him. And so everyone was out of temper.

But in the secret and magical chamber at the heart of the How, King Caspian, with Cornelius and the Badger and Nikabrik and Trumpkin, were at council. Thick pillars of ancient workmanship supported the roof. In the center was the Stone itself—a stone table, split right down the center, and covered with what had once been writing of some kind: but ages of wind and rain and snow had almost worn them away in old times when the Stone Table had stood on the hilltop, and the Mound had not yet been built above it. They were not using the Table nor sitting round it: it was too magic a thing for any common use. They sat on logs a little way from it, and between them was a rough wooden table, on which stood a rude clay lamp lighting up their pale faces and throwing big shadows on the walls.



“If your Majesty is ever to use the Horn,” said Trufflehunter, “I think the time has now come.” Caspian had of course told them of his treasure several days ago.

“We are certainly in great need,” answered Caspian. “But it is hard to be sure we are at our greatest. Supposing there came an even worse need and we had already used it?”

“By that argument,” said Nikabrik, “your Majesty will never use it until it is too late.”

“I agree with that,” said Doctor Cornelius.

“And what do you think, Trumpkin?” asked Caspian.

“Oh, as for me,” said the Red Dwarf, who had been listening with complete indifference, “your Majesty knows I think the Horn—and that bit of broken stone over there—and your great King Peter—and your Lion Aslan—are all eggs in moonshine. It’s all one to me when your Majesty blows the Horn. All I insist on is that the army is told nothing about it. There’s no good raising hopes of magical help which (as I think) are sure to be disappointed.”

“Then in the name of Aslan we will wind Queen Susan’s Horn,” said Caspian.

“There is one thing, Sire,” said Doctor Cornelius, “that should perhaps be done first. We do not know what form the help will take. It might call Aslan himself from oversea. But I think it is more likely to call

Peter the High King and his mighty consorts down from the high past. But in either case, I do not think we can be sure that the help will come to this very spot—”

“You never said a truer word,” put in Trumpkin.

“I think,” went on the learned man, “that they—or he—will come back to one or other of the Ancient Places of Narnia. This, where we now sit, is the most ancient and most deeply magical of all, and here, I think, the answer is likeliest to come. But there are two others. One is Lantern Waste, up-river, west of Beaversdam, where the Royal Children first appeared in Narnia, as the records tell. The other is down at the river-mouth, where their castle of Cair Paravel once stood. And if Aslan himself comes, that would be the best place for meeting him too, for every story says that he is the son of the great Emperor-over-the-Sea, and over the sea he will pass. I should like very much to send messengers to both places, to Lantern Waste and the river-mouth, to receive them—or him—or it.”

“Just as I thought,” muttered Trumpkin. “The first result of all this foolery is not to bring us help but to lose us two fighters.”

“Who would you think of sending, Doctor Cornelius?” asked Caspian.

“Squirrels are best for getting through enemy country without being caught,” said Trufflehunter.

“All *our* squirrels (and we haven’t many),” said Nikabrik, “are rather flighty. The only one I’d trust on a job like that would be Pattertwig.”

“Let it be Pattertwig, then,” said King Caspian. “And who for our other messenger? I know you’d go, Trufflehunter, but you haven’t the speed. Nor you, Doctor Cornelius.”

“I *won’t* go,” said Nikabrik. “With all these Humans and beasts about, there must be a Dwarf here to see that the Dwarfs are fairly treated.”

“Thimbles and thunderstorms!” cried Trumpkin in a rage. “Is that how you speak to the King? Send me, Sire, I’ll go.”

“But I thought you didn’t believe in the Horn, Trumpkin,” said Caspian.

“No more I do, your Majesty. But what’s that got to do with it? I might as well die on a wild goose chase as die here. You are my King. I know the difference between giving advice and taking orders. You’ve had my advice, and now it’s the time for orders.”

“I will never forget this, Trumpkin,” said Caspian. “Send for Pattertwig, one of you. And when shall I blow the Horn?”

“I would wait for sunrise, your Majesty,” said Doctor Cornelius. “That sometimes has an effect in operations of White Magic.”

A few minutes later Pattertwig arrived and had his task explained to him. As he was, like many squirrels, full of courage and dash and energy and excitement and mischief (not to say conceit), he no sooner

heard it than he was eager to be off. It was arranged that he should run for Lantern Waste while Trumpkin made the shorter journey to the river-mouth. After a hasty meal they both set off with the fervent thanks and good wishes of the King, the Badger, and Cornelius.

HOOFSTUK 7

Ou Narnia in gevaar



Die plek waar hulle die faune ontmoet het, is natuurlik die Dansgras self en hier bly Kaspian en sy vriende tot die nag van die groot raadsvergadering. Om onder die sterre te slaap, niks behalwe putwater te drink en hoofsaaklik van neute en wilde vrugte te leef, is 'n vreemde ervaring vir Kaspian wat gewoond is aan 'n bed met sylakens in die kasteel in 'n kamer behang met tapis- serieë, met maaltye in goue en silwer skottels in die voorkamer, en diensbodes wat gereed staan om sy bevele uit te voer. Maar hy het nog nooit meer pret gehad nie. Nog nooit was slaap meer verfrissend of het kos lekkerder gesmaak nie. Hy begin taai word en daar is 'n meer koninklike uitdrukking op sy gesig.

Dan breek die groot nag aan en sy onderskeie vreemde onderdane kom een-een en twee-twee en drie-drie of in sesse en sewes onder 'n amperse volmaan oor die gras aangeloop. Sy hart swel toe hy die getalle sien en hulle hoor groet. Almal wat hy ontmoet het, is daar: boepens- bere en rooi dwerge en swart dwerge, molle en ratels, hase en krimpvarkies en vele ander wat hy nog nie ontmoet het nie - vyf satirs, so rooi soos jakkalse, die hele afdeling pratende muise, tot die tande gewapen, wat ag- ter 'n skril trompet aanloop, 'n paar uile en die ou raaf van Ravenskuur. Laaste van almal, saam met die sentours (en dit slaan Kaspian se asem skoon weg), verskyn 'n klein, maar egte reus, Wimbelweer van Dooiemansheu- wel, en op sy rug dra hy 'n mandjie vol baie seesiek dwerge wat sy aanbod van 'n geleentheid aanvaar het en nou wens hulle het eerder gestap.

Die boepensbere is baie gretig om eers fees te vier en die vergadering later te hou, dalk eers die volgende dag. Riepetjiep en sy muise sê die vergaderings en feeste kan eers wag en stel voor dat Miraz sommer daardie nag in sy eie kasteel bestorm moet word. Trippeltakkies en die ander eekhorings sê (hulle kan met vol monde praat) die vergadering en die fees moet sommer gelyktydig gehou word. Die molle stel voor dat hulle loopgrawe om die grasperk graaf voor iemand enigiets anders doen. Die faune dink dit

sal beter wees om met 'n statige dans te begin. Die ou raaf wat met die bere saamstem dat dit te lank sal neem om 'n voile raadsvergadering voor aandete te hou, versoek dat hy toegelaat word om 'n kort rede aan die hele geselskap voor te lees. Maar Kaspian en die sentours en die dwerge maak korte mette van al hierdie voorstelle en dring daarop aan dat daar dadelik 'n egte krygsraad gehou word.

Toe al die ander wesens oorreed is om stil in 'n groot kring te gaan sit en toe hulle (met baie meer inspanning) vir Trippeltakkies sover gekry het om nie meer heen en weer te hardloop en, "Stilte! Stilte, almal, vir die koning se toespraak," te sê nie, staan Kaspian, wat 'n bietjie gespanne voel, op. "Narniane!" begin hy, maar hy kom nie verder nie, want op daardie oomblik sê Kamillo die haas, "Sjuut! Daar's 'n mens hier naby iewers."

Hulle is almal wilde diere wat daaraan gewoond is om gejaag te word en almal word so stil soos standbeelde. Al die diere draai hul neuse in die rigting wat Kamillo aan- gedui het.

"Ons sal hom regsien," sê 'n swart dwerg grimmig en sit 'n pyl in sy boog.

"Moenie skiet as hy alleen is nie," sê Kaspian. "Vang hom."

"Hoekom?" vra die dwerg.

"Maak soos vir jou gesê is," sê Glenstorm die sentour. Almal wag in stilte terwyl die drie dwerge en die twee ratels ligvoets na die bome aan die noordwestekant van die grasperk glip. Toe hoor hulle 'n dwergagtige kreet, "Stop! Wie is dit?" en 'n skielik sprong. 'n Oomblik later sê 'n stem wat Kaspian goed ken, "Alles reg, alles reg, ek is nie gewapen nie. Hou my arms vas, getroue ratels, as julle moet, maar moet hulle nie afbyt nie. Ek wil met die koning praat."

"Doktor Kornelius!" roep Kaspian vol vreugde uit en storm vorentoe om sy ou onderwyser te groet. Almal drom om hulle saam.

"Ba!" sê Nikabrik. "'n Afvallige dwerg. 'n Half-en-hal- wer! Sal ek sy keel met my swaard deurboor?"

"Bly stil, Nikabrik," sê Trumpels. "Hoekom moet hy vir sy voorvaders se dwaashede boet?"

"Hy is my grootste vriend en die een wat my lewe gered het," kondig Kaspian aan. "En enigeen wat nie in sy geselskap wil wees nie, kan my leer verlaat: onmiddellik. Liewe doktor, ek is so bly om jou weer te sien. Hoe het jy geweet waar ons is?"

"Deur 'n klein bietjie toorkuns te gebruik, u Majesteit," sê die doktor wat nog steeds hyg en blaas van vin- nig loop. "Maar daar is nie nou tyd om daarop in te gaan nie. Ons moet almal dadelik van hierdie plek af wegkom.

Julle is reeds verraai en Miraz is aan die opruk. Voor móremiddag twaalfuur sal julle omsingel wees.

“Verraai!” sê Kaspian. “En deur wie?”

“Ongetwyfeld nog ’n afvallige dwerg,” sê Nikabrik.

“Deur jou perd, Destrier,” sê doktor Kornelius. “Die arme dier het nie van beter geweet nie. Na jy afgeval het, is hy terug na sy stal by die kasteel. Toe het almal besef jy’t gevlug. Ek het myself skaars gemaak, omdat ek geen begeerte het om in Miraz se folterkamer ondervra te word nie. Ek het ’n redelik goeie raaiskoot met my kris- talbal gewaag oor waar ek jou sal kry. Maar die hele dag — dis die dag voor gister — het ek Miraz se spoorsnyers in die woud gesien. Gister het ek gehoor sy weermag is opgeroep. Ek dink sommige van jul - hm - suiwer dwerge het nie soveel bosvaardighede soos ’n mens sou verwag nie. Julie het oral spore gelos. Baie agtelosig. In elk geval, iets het vir Miraz gewaarsku dat Ou Narnia nie so dood is as wat hy gehoop het nie, en hy is aan die opruk.”

“Hoera!” sê ’n baie skril en baie klein stemmetjie van iewers by die dokter se voete. “Laat hulle kom! Al wat ek vra, is dat die koning my en my mense op die voorpunt sal plaas.”

“Wat op aarde? Het u Majesteit sprinkane - of mu- skiete - in sy leer?” Nadat doktor Kornelius gebuk en van naderby deur sy bril gekyk het, bars hy uit van die lag.

“By die Leeu!” roep hy uit. “Dis ’n muis. Signor Muis, ek sal jou graag beter wil leer ken. Dit is ’n eer om so ’n dapper dier te ontmoet.”

“My vriendskap sal jy he, geleerde mens,” piep Riepe- tjiep. “En enige dwerg — of reus — in die leer wat lelik met jou praat, sal met my swaard te doen kry.”

“Is daar tyd vir hierdie geklikheid?” vra Nikabrik. “Wat is ons planne? Veg of vlug?”

“Veg as ons moet,” sê Trumpels. “Maar ons is kwalik reg daarvoor en dit is nie ’n maklik verdedigbare plek nie.”

“Ek hou nie van die idee van weghardloop nie,” sê Kaspian.

“Hoor-hoor!” sê die boepensbere. “Wat ons ook al doen, laat daar tog nie *gehardloop* word nie. Veral nie voor aandete nie; en ook nie te gou daarna nie.”

“Dié wat eerste hardloop, hardloop nie noodwendig ook laaste nie,” sê die sentour. “En hoekom sal ons die vyand toelaat om ons posisie te kies en dit nie self doen nie? Kom ons gaan soek ’n goeie plek.”

“Dis wys, u Majesteit, dis baie wys,” sê Truffelsoeker.

“Maar waarheen kan ons gaan?” vra etlike stemme.

“U Majesteit,” sê doktor Kornelius, “en al die verskil- lende wesens, ek dink ons moet ooswaarts met die rivier langs na die groot woude vlug. Die Telmarene haat daar- die gebied. Hulle was nog altyd bang vir die see en vir iets wat vanoor die see mag kom. Dis hoekom hulle die groot woude daar laat groei het. Volgens oorlewering was die oeroue Kair Paravel by die mond van die rivier. Daardie hele deel is ons goedgesind en ons vyand vrees dit. Ons moet na Aslan se Hoop toe gaan.”

“Aslan se Hoop?” vra verskeie stemme. “Ons weet nie waar dit is nie.”

“Dit lê in die omstreke van die Groot Woude en is ’n enorme hoë heuwel wat die Narniane in oeroue tye gebou het oor ’n uiters toweragtige plek waar daar - en dis seker nog daar - ’n magiese steen is. Die heuwel is uit- gehol en die binnekant is vol gange en grotte en die steen is in die heel middelste grot. Daar is plek vir al ons voorraad en diegene van ons wat bedekking die nodigste het en gewoon is aan ’n ondergrondse lewe kan in die grotte gehuisves word. Die res van ons kan in die woud skuil. As dit daarop neerkom, kan ons almal (behalwe hierdie verdienstelike reus) terugtrek na die heuwel toe waar ons buite bereik van enige gevaar behalwe verhon- gering sal wees.”

“Dis goed ons het ’n geleerde man onder ons,” sê Truffelsoeker, maar Trumpets brom binnensmonds, “Sop en seldery! Ek wens ons leiers wil minder ouvroustories verkoop en meer aan kos en wapens dink.” Maar almal keur Kornelius se voorstel goed en daardie nag, ’n halfu- ur later, is hulle aan die mars. Voor sonsopkoms daag hulle by Aslan se Hoop op.

Dit is beslis ’n ontsagwekkende plek, ’n ronde groen heuwel bo-op nog ’n heuwel wat lank reeds met borne toegegroeï is en een klein, lae ingang wat na binne lei. Die tunnels aan die binnekant is ’n doolhof tot jy hulle leer ken het en is met gladde klippe uitgevoer met ’n klipdek. Toe hy by die skemerte inloer, sien Kaspian op die klippe vreemde karakters en slangagtige patrone en prente waarin die figuur van ’n leeu oor en oor herhaal word. Dit lyk vir hom dit het aan ’n selfs ouer Narnia behoort as die een waarvan sy oppasster hom vertel het.

Dit is nadat hulle hul intrek in en om die heuwel ge- neem het dat die geluk teen hulle begin draai het. Koning Miraz se verspieters het hul nuwe laer gou ontdek en hy en sy leer daag aan die rand van die woud op. Soos so dikwels gebeur, is die vyand sterker as wat hulle gedink het. Kaspian se hart sink toe hy afdeling na afdeling sien aankom. Hoewel Miraz se manne bang vir die woud is, is hulle nog banger vir Miraz en met hom in bevel dra hulle die stryd tot diep in die woud en soms tot amper by die Hoop self. Kaspian en ander kapteins lei natuurlik talle aanvalle na oop

gebiede. Daar word feitlik elke dag geveg en soms ook snags, maar oor die algemeen is Kaspian se manskappe die slegste daaraan toe.

Eindelik kom daar 'n nag toe alles so sleg moontlik gegaan het en die reën wat die hele dag swaar geval het teen die aand deur 'n rou koue vervang word. Kaspian het sy grootste geveg ooit vir daardie oggend beplan en almal vestig hul hoop daarop. Vergesel van die meeste van die dwerge, gaan hy die koning se regtervleuel teen dagbreek aanval en dan, wanneer hulle in 'n hewige stryd gewikkel is, gaan die reus, Wimbelseer die sentours en sommige van die wreedaardigste diere van iewers anders uitbreek en probeer om die koning van die res van sy leer af te sny. Maar dit slaag nie. Niemand het vir Kaspian gewaarsku (omdat niemand in hierdie latere jare van Narnia dit onthou het nie) dat reuse glad nie slim is nie. Hoewel die arme Wimbelseer so dapper soos 'n leeu is, is hy in hierdie opsig 'n ware reus. Hy storm op die verkeerde tyd uit, en van die verkeerde plek af, en sowel sy manskappe as Kaspian se ly swaar verliese en doen min

skade aan die vyand. Die beste van die bere het seergekry, 'n sentour is erg gewond en daar is min in Kaspian se afdeling wat nie bloed verloor het nie. Dit is 'n bedremmelde groep strydery wat onder die druppelende bome skuil om hul karige aand- ete te nuttig.

Die bedremmelde- ste van almal is die reus Wimbelseer.

Hy weet dis alles sy skuld. Hy sit doodstil;

groot trane rol tot aan die punt van sy neus en val met 'n groot plasgeluid op die hele kamp muise wat net mooi warm en slaperig begin voel het.

Hulle spring almal op, skud die water uit hul ore, wring hul kombersies uit en vra die reus in skril, kwaai stemme of hy dink hulle is nie nat genoeg sonder hierdie soort ding nie. En toe word ander mense wakker en sê vir die muise hulle is as verspieters in diens geneem en nie om konsert te hou nie en hoekom kan hulle nie stilbly nie. Wimbelseer sluip op sy tone weg op soek na 'n plek waar hy in vrede mistroostig kan wees en trap op iemand se stert en iemand (hulle het agterna gesê dit was die jakkals) byt hom. En op hierdie manier is almal uiteindelik omgekras.

Maar in die geheime en toweragtige kamer in die hart van die Hoop, is koning Kaspian saam met Kornelius en die ratel en Nikabrik en Trumpels besig om planne te smee. Dik pilare wat getuig van oeroue vakmanskap hou die dak op. In die middel is die Steen self - 'n kliptafel wat reg in die middel gekraak is, bedek met wat eens op

'n tyd skrif van die een of ander aard was - maar eeue van wind en reën en sneeu in die ou dae toe die Steen- tafel op die kruin van die heuwel gestaan het en die Hoop nog nie daarvoor gebou is nie, het dit feitlik heeltemal ver-

weer. Hulle gebruik nie die Tafel nie en sit ook nie om dit nie, dis té betower vir alledaagse gebruik. Hulle sit op stompe 'n entjie daarvandaan en tussen hulle is 'n rowwe houttafel waarop 'n ruwe kleilamp staan wat hul bleek gesigte verlig en groot skaduwees teen die mure gooi.

“As u Majesteit ooit die horing gaan gebruik,” sê Truffelsoeker, “dan is die tyd nou ryp daarvoor.” Kaspian het uit die aard van die saak etlike dae gelede vir hulle van sy vonds vertel.

“Ons is beslis in groot nood,” antwoord Kaspian. “Maar dis swaar om te weet of dit nou op sy grootste is. Sê nou ons raak nog erger in die knyp en dan het ons dit klaar gebruik?”

“As ons so gaan redeneer,” sê Nikabrik, “sal u Majesteit dit eers gebruik wanneer dit te laat is.”

“Ek stem saam daarmee,” sê doktor Kornelius.

“En wat dink jy, Trumpels?” vra Kaspian.

“O, wat my betref,” sê die rooi dwerg wat met die grootste onverskilligheid sit en luister het, “weet u Majesteit, ek dink tog die horing - en daardie storie oor die gebreekte klip daar anderkant - en jul groot koning Peter - en jul leeu Aslan - is alles simpel versinsels. Vir my maak dit regtig nie saak wanneer u Majesteit die horing blaas nie. Al waarop ek aandring, is dat niks hieroor vir die leër gesê word nie. Dis onnodig om verwagtinge van tower- hulp te skep en dit dan net (so dink ek) weer te verydel.”

“Dan sal ons, in die naam van Aslan, koningin Susan se horing blaas,” sê Kaspian.

“Daar is een ding, Majesteit,” sê doktor Kornelius, “wat ons miskien eers moet doen. Ons weet nie waiters vorm die hulp gaan aanneem nie. Dit mag Aslan self van oor die see ontbied. Hoewel ek dink dis meer waarskynlik dat dit vir Peter die hoofkoning en sy magtige met- geselle uit die verre verlede sal oproep. Maar in ieder geval dink ek nie ons kan daarop staatmaak dat die hulp na hierdie presiese plek sal kom nie - ”

“’n Waarder woord het jy nog nie gespreek nie,” sê Trumpels.

“Ek dink,” gaan die geleerde man voort, “hulle - of hy - sal na die een of ander van Narnia se heilige plekke kom. Hierdie een waar ons nou sit, is die oeroudste en diep toweragtigste van almal en ek dink ons hulp sal waarskynlik hierheen kom. Maar daar is twee ander. Die een is die Lanternwoestyn, verder stroomop, wes van Bewerdam, waar die koninklike kinders volgens die geskrifte die eerste keer in Narnia verskyn het. Die ander een is onder by die riviermond waar hul kasteel van Kair Paravel vroeër gestaan het. En indien Aslan self kom, sal dit die beste plek wees om hom ook te ontmoet, want volgens elke verhaal is hy die seun van die groot keiser-oor-die-see, en hy sal

van oor die see kom. Ek sal graag boodskappers na albei plekke wil stuur, na die Lanternwoestyn en die riviermond, om hulle - of hom - of dit — te ontvang.”

“Nes ek gedink het,” brom Trumpels. “Die eerste ge- volg van hierdie gekkerny is dat ons twee soldate verloor het.”

“Wie dink jy moet ons stuur, doktor Kornelius?” vra Kaspian.

“Eekhorings kan die beste deur vyandelike gebied dring sonder om gevang te word,” sê Truffelsoeker.

“Al *ons* eekhorings (en ons het nie baie nie),” sê Nika- brik, “is ietwat wispelturig. Die enigste een wat ek met so ’n opdrag sal vertrou, is Trippeltakkies.”

“Dan sal dit Trippeltakkies wees,” sê koning Kaspian. “En wie gaan ons ander boodskapper wees? Ek weet jy sal gaan, Truffelsoeker, maar jy’t nie die spoed nie. Ook nie jy nie, doktor Kornelius.”

“Ek *sal* nie gaan nie,” sê Nikabrik. “Met al hierdie mense en diere in die rondte moet daar ’n dwerg wees om te sorg dat die dwerge billik behandel word.”

“Vingerhoede en donderstorms!” skree Trumpels woe- dend. “Is dit hoe jy met die koning praat? Stuur my, Majesteit, ek sal gaan.”

“Maar ek dag jy glo nie in die horing nie, Trumpels,” sê Kaspian.

“Ek glo nie daarin nie, u Majesteit. Maar wat het dit daarmee uit te waai? Ek kan my lewe net sowel tydens ’n sinnelose sending verloor as hier. U Majesteit is my koning. Ek ken die verskil tussen raad gee en opdragte ontvang. U Majesteit het my raad gehoor en nou is dit tyd vir opdragte.”

“Ek sal dit nooit vergeet nie, Trumpels,” sê Kaspian. “Loop haal vir Trippeltakkies, een van julle. Wanneer sal ons die horing blaas?”

“Ek sou wag tot sonsopkoms, u Majesteit,” sê doktor Kornelius. “Dit het soms ’n uitwerking op Wit Tower- kuns.”

Trippeltakkies daag ’n paar minute later op en sy taak word aan hom verduidelik. Aangesien hy soos baie eekhorings vol waagmoed en durf en energie en lewenslus en streke is (om nie te praat van ydelheid nie), het hy dit skaars gehoor of hy is gretig om te vertrek. Dit word

afgespreek dat hy na die Lanternwoestyn sal gaan, ter- wyl Trumpels die korter reis na die riviermond sal aan- pak. Na ’n haastige maaltyd trek albei van hulle veg met vurige bedankings en goeie wense

van die koring, die ratel en Kornelius.

CHAPTER EIGHT

HOW THEY LEFT THE ISLAND

“AND SO,” SAID TRUMPKIN (FOR, AS YOU have realized, it was he who had been telling all this story to the four children, sitting on the grass in the ruined hall of Cair Paravel)—“and so I put a crust or two in my pocket, left behind all weapons but my dagger, and took to the woods in the gray of the morning. I’d been plugging away for many hours when there came a sound that I’d never heard the like of in my born days. Eh, I won’t forget that. The whole air was full of it, loud as thunder but far longer, cool and sweet as music over water, but strong enough to shake the woods. And I said to myself, ‘If that’s not the Horn, call me a rabbit.’ And a moment later I wondered why he hadn’t blown it sooner—”

“What time was it?” asked Edmund.

“Between nine and ten of the clock,” said Trumpkin.

“Just when we were at the railway station!” said all the children, and looked at one another with shining eyes.

“Please go on,” said Lucy to the Dwarf.

“Well, as I was saying, I wondered, but I went on as hard as I could pelt. I kept on all night—and then, when it was half light this morning, as if I’d no more sense than a Giant, I risked a short cut across open country to cut off a big loop of the river, and was caught. Not by the army, but by a pompous old fool who has charge of a little castle which is Miraz’s last stronghold toward the coast. I needn’t tell you they got no true tale out of me, but I was a Dwarf and that was enough. But, lobsters and lollipops! it is a good thing the seneschal was a pompous fool. Anyone else would have run me through there and then. But nothing would do for him short of a grand execution: sending me down ‘to the ghosts’ in the full ceremonial way. And then this young lady” (he nodded at Susan) “does her bit of archery—and it was pretty shooting, let me tell you—and here we are. And without my armor, for of course they took that.” He knocked out and refilled his pipe.

“Great Scott!” said Peter. “So it was the horn—your own horn, Su—that dragged us all off that seat on the platform yesterday morning! I can hardly believe it; yet it all fits in.”

“I don’t know why you shouldn’t believe it,” said Lucy, “if you believe in magic at all. Aren’t there lots of stories about magic forcing people out of one place—out of one world—into another? I mean, when a magician in *The Arabian Nights* calls up a Jinn, it has to come. We had to come, just like that.”

“Yes,” said Peter, “I suppose what makes it feel so queer is that in the stories it’s always someone in our world who does the calling. One

doesn't really think about where the Jinn's coming *from*."

"And now we know what it feels like for the Jinn," said Edmund with a chuckle. "Golly! It's a bit uncomfortable to know that we can be whistled for like that. It's worse than what Father says about living at the mercy of the telephone."

"But we want to be here, don't we," said Lucy, "if Aslan wants us?"

"Meanwhile," said the Dwarf, "what are we to do? I suppose I'd better go back to King Caspian and tell him no help has come."

"No help?" said Susan. "But it *has* worked. And here we are."

"Um—um—yes, to be sure. I see that," said the Dwarf, whose pipe seemed to be blocked (at any rate he made himself very busy cleaning it). "But—well—I mean—"

"But don't you yet see who we are?" shouted Lucy. "You *are* stupid."

"I suppose you are the four children out of the old stories," said Trumpkin. "And I'm very glad to meet you of course. And it's very interesting, no doubt. But—no offense?"—and he hesitated again.

"Do get on and say whatever you're going to say," said Edmund.

"Well, then—no offense," said Trumpkin. "But, you know, the King and Trufflehunter and Doctor Cornelius were expecting—well, if you see what I mean, help. To put it in another way, I think they'd been imagining you as great warriors. As it is—we're awfully fond of children and all that, but just at the moment, in the middle of a war—but I'm sure you understand."

"You mean you think we're no good," said Edmund, getting red in the face.

"Now pray don't be offended," interrupted the Dwarf. "I assure you, my dear little friends—"

"*Little* from you is really a bit too much," said Edmund, jumping up. "I suppose you don't believe we won the Battle of Beruna? Well, you can say what you like about me because I know—"

"There's no good losing our tempers," said Peter. "Let's fit him out with fresh armor and fit ourselves out from the treasure chamber, and have a talk after that."

"I don't quite see the point—" began Edmund, but Lucy whispered in his ear, "Hadn't we better do what Peter says? He is the High King, you know. And I think he has an idea." So Edmund agreed and by the aid of his torch they all, including Trumpkin, went down the steps again into the dark coldness and dusty splendor of the treasure house.

The Dwarf's eyes glistened as he saw the wealth that lay on the shelves (though he had to stand on tiptoes to do so) and he muttered to himself, "It would never do to let Nikabrik see this; never." They found easily enough a mail shirt for him, a sword, a helmet, a shield, a bow and quiverful of arrows, all of dwarfish size. The helmet was of copper, set with rubies, and there was gold on the hilt of the sword:

Trumpkin had never seen, much less carried, so much wealth in all his life. The children also put on mail shirts and helmets; a sword and shield were found for Edmund and a bow for Lucy—Peter and Susan were of course already carrying their gifts. As they came back up the stairway, jingling in their mail, and already looking and feeling more like Narnians and less like schoolchildren, the two boys were behind, apparently making some plan. Lucy heard Edmund say, “No, let me do it. It will be more of a suck for him if I win, and less of a let-down for us all if I fail.”

“All right, Ed,” said Peter.

When they came out into the daylight Edmund turned to the Dwarf very politely and said, “I’ve got something to ask you. Kids like us don’t often have the chance of meeting a great warrior like you. Would you have a little fencing match with me? It would be frightfully decent.”

“But, lad,” said Trumpkin, “these swords are sharp.”

“I know,” said Edmund. “But I’ll never get anywhere near you and you’ll be quite clever enough to disarm me without doing me any damage.”

“It’s a dangerous game,” said Trumpkin. “But since you make such a point of it, I’ll try a pass or two.”

Both swords were out in a moment and the three others jumped off the dais and stood watching. It was well worth it. It was not like the silly fighting you see with broad swords on the stage. It was not even like the rapier fighting which you sometimes see rather better done. This was real broad-sword fighting. The great thing is to slash at your enemy’s legs and feet because they are the part that have no armor. And when he slashes at yours you jump with both feet off the ground so that his blow goes under them. This gave the Dwarf an advantage because Edmund, being much taller, had to be always stooping. I don’t think Edmund would have had a chance if he had fought Trumpkin twenty-four hours earlier. But the air of Narnia had been working upon him ever since they arrived on the island, and all his old battles came back to him, and his arms and fingers remembered their old skill. He was King Edmund once more. Round and round the two combatants circled, stroke after stroke they gave, and Susan (who never could learn to like this sort of thing) shouted out, “Oh, *do* be careful.” And then, so quickly that no one (unless they knew, as Peter did could quite see how it happened, Edmund flashed his sword round with a peculiar twist, the Dwarf’s sword flew out of his grip, and Trumpkin was wringing his empty hand as you do after a “sting” from a cricket-bat.



"Not hurt, I hope, my dear little friend?" said Edmund, panting a little and returning his own sword to its sheath.

"I see the point," said Trumpkin drily. "You know a trick I never learned."

"That's quite true," put in Peter. "The best swordsman in the world may be disarmed by a trick that's new to him. I think it's only fair to give Trumpkin a chance at something else. Will you have a shooting match with my sister? There are no tricks in archery, you know."

"Ah, you're jokers, you are," said the Dwarf. "I begin to see. As if I didn't know how she can shoot, after what happened this morning. All the same, I'll have a try." He spoke gruffly, but his eyes brightened, for he was a famous bowman among his own people.

All five of them came out into the courtyard.

"What's to be the target?" asked Peter.

"I think that apple hanging over the wall on the branch there would do," said Susan.

"That'll do nicely, lass," said Trumpkin. "You mean the yellow one near the middle of the arch?"

"No, not that," said Susan. "The red one up above—over the battlement."

The Dwarf's face fell. "Looks more like a cherry than an apple," he muttered, but he said nothing out loud.

They tossed up for first shot (greatly to the interest of Trumpkin, who had never seen a coin tossed before) and Susan lost. They were to shoot from the top of the steps that led from the hall into the courtyard. Everyone could see from the way the Dwarf took his position and handled his bow that he knew what he was about.

Twang went the string. It was an excellent shot. The tiny apple shook as the arrow passed, and a leaf came fluttering down. Then Susan went to the top of the steps and strung her bow. She was not enjoying her match half so much as Edmund had enjoyed his; not because she had any doubt about hitting the apple but because Susan was so tender-hearted that she almost hated to beat someone who had been beaten already. The Dwarf watched her keenly as she drew the shaft to her ear. A moment later, with a little soft thump which they could all hear in that quiet place, the apple fell to the grass with Susan's arrow in it.



"Oh, well done, Su," shouted the other children.

"It wasn't really any better than yours," said Susan to the Dwarf. "I think there was a tiny breath of wind as you shot."

"No, there wasn't," said Trumpkin. "Don't tell me. I know when I am fairly beaten. I won't even say that the scar of my last wound catches me a bit when I get my arm well back—"

Oh, are you wounded?" asked Lucy. "Do let me look."

"It's not a sight for little girls," began Trumpkin, but then he suddenly checked himself. "There I go talking like a fool again," he said. "I suppose you're as likely to be a great surgeon as your brother was to be a great swordsman or your sister to be a great archer." He sat down on the steps and took off his hauberk and slipped down his little shirt, showing an arm hairy and muscular (in proportion) as a sailor's though not much bigger than a child's. There was a clumsy bandage on the shoulder which Lucy proceeded to unroll. Underneath, the cut looked very nasty and there was a good deal of swelling. "Oh, poor Trumpkin," said Lucy. "How horrid." Then she carefully dripped onto it one single drop of the cordial from her flask.

"Hullo. Eh? What have you done?" said Trumpkin. But however he turned his head and squinted and whisked his beard to and fro, he couldn't quite see his own shoulder. Then he felt it as well as he could, getting his arms and fingers into very difficult positions as you do when you're trying to scratch a place that is just out of reach. Then he swung his arm and raised it and tried the muscles, and finally jumped to his feet crying, "Giants and junipers! It's cured! It's as good as new." After that he burst into a great laugh and said, "Well, I've made as big a fool of myself as ever a Dwarf did. No offense, I hope? My humble duty to your Majesties all—humble duty. And thanks for my life, my cure, my breakfast—and my lesson."

The children all said it was quite all right and not to mention it.

"And now," said Peter, "if you've really decided to believe in us—"

"I have," said the Dwarf.

"It's quite clear what we have to do. We must join King Caspian at once."

"The sooner the better," said Trumpkin. "My being such a fool has already wasted about an hour."

"It's about two days' journey, the way you came," said Peter. "For us, I mean. We can't walk all day and night like you Dwarfs." Then he

turned to the others. "What Trumpkin calls Aslan's How is obviously the Stone Table itself. You remember it was about half a day's march, or a little less, from there down to the Fords of Beruna—"

"Beruna's Bridge, we call it," said Trumpkin.

"There was no bridge in our time," said Peter. "And then from Beruna down to here was another day and a bit. We used to get home about teatime on the second day, going easily. Going hard, we could do the whole thing in a day and a half perhaps."

"But remember it's all woods now," said Trumpkin, "and there are enemies to dodge."

"Look here," said Edmund, "need we go by the same way that Our Dear Little Friend came?"

"No more of that, your Majesty, if you love me," said the Dwarf.

"Very well," said Edmund. "May I say our D.L.F.?"

"Oh, Edmund," said Susan. "Don't keep *on* at him like that."

"That's all right, lass—I mean your Majesty," said Trumpkin with a chuckle. "A jibe won't raise a blister." (And after that they often called him the D.L.F. till they'd almost forgotten what it meant.)

"As I was saying," continued Edmund, "we needn't go that way. Why shouldn't we row a little south till we come to Glasswater Creek and row up it? That brings us up behind the Hill of the Stone Table, and we'll be safe while we're at sea. If we start at once, we can be at the head of Glasswater before dark, get a few hours' sleep, and be with Caspian pretty early tomorrow,"

"What a thing it is to know the coast," said Trumpkin. "None of us knows anything about Glasswater."

"What about food?" asked Susan.

"Oh, we'll have to do with apples," said Lucy. "Do let's get on. We've done nothing yet, and we've been here nearly two days."

"And anyway, no one's going to have my hat for a fish-basket again," said Edmund.

They used one of the raincoats as a kind of bag and put a good many apples in it. Then they all had a good long drink at the well (for they would meet no more fresh water till they landed at the head of the Creek) and went down to the boat. The children were sorry to leave Cair Paravel, which, even in ruins, had begun to feel like home again.

"The D.L.F. had better steer," said Peter, "and Ed and I will take an oar each. Half a moment, though. We'd better take off our mail: we're going to be pretty warm before we're done. The girls had better be in the bows and shout directions to the D.L.F. because he doesn't know the way. You'd better get us a fair way out to sea till we've passed the island."

And soon the green, wooded coast of the island was falling away behind them, and its little bays and headlands were beginning to look

flatter, and the boat was rising and falling in the gentle swell. The sea began to grow bigger around them and, in the distance, bluer, but close round the boat it was green and bubbly. Everything smelled salt and there was no noise except the swishing of water and the clop-clop of water against the sides and the splash of the oars and the jolting noise of the rowlocks. The sun grew hot.

It was delightful for Lucy and Susan in the bows, bending over the edge and trying to get their hands in the sea which they could never quite reach. The bottom, mostly pure, pale sand but with occasional patches of purple seaweed, could be seen beneath them.

"It's like old times," said Lucy. "Do you remember our voyage to Terebinthia—and Galma—and Seven Isles—and the Lone Islands?"

"Yes," said Susan, "and our great ship the *Splendor Hyaline*, with the swan's head at her prow and the carved swan's wings coming back almost to her waist?"

"And the silken sails, and the great stern lanterns?"

"And the feasts on the poop and the musicians."

"Do you remember when we had the musicians up in the rigging playing flutes so that it sounded like music out of the sky?"

Presently Susan took over Edmund's oar and he came forward to join Lucy. They had passed the island now and stood closer in to the shore—all wooded and deserted. They would have thought it very pretty if they had not remembered the time when it was open and breezy and full of merry friends.

"Phew! This is pretty grueling work," said Peter.

"Can't I row for a bit?" said Lucy.

"The oars are too big for you," said Peter shortly, not because he was cross but because he had no strength to spare for talking.

Hoofstuk 8

Hulle verlaat die eiland



"En so," sê Trumpels (want soos jy seker besef het, is dit hy wat hierdie storie vir die vierstuks op die gras in Kair Paravel se vervalde saal vertel het) - "en so het ek 'n paar korsies in my sak gesit, al my wapens behalwe my dolk agtergelaat, en die woude in die gryns oggendure binnegegaan. Ek het vir baie ure vasberade voortgesukkel, en toe kom daar 'n geluid wat ek in my hele lewe nog nooit gehoor het nie. Tag, ek sal dit nooit vergeet nie. Die lug was gevul daarmee, harder as donderweer, maar meer uitgerei, koel en soet soos musiek oor water, maar sterk genoeg om die woude te skud. En ek het vir myself gesê, 'As dit nie die horing is nie, is ek 'n haas.' En 'n oomblik later

het ek gewonder hoekom hy dit nie al vroeër geblaas het nie — ”

“Hoe laat was dit?” vra Edmund.

“Tussen nege- en tienuur,” sê Trumpels.

“Net toe ons by die stasie was!” sê al vier en kyk met skitterende oë na mekaar.

“Gaan aan,” sê Lucy vir die dwerg.

“Wel, soos ek gesê het, ek het gewonder, maar ek het in voile vaart voortgegaan. Ek het die hele nag uitgehou - en vanoggend in die skemer, asof ek nie meer verstand as ’n reus het nie, het ek ’n kortpad oor ’n oop stuk veld gekies om ’n groot kronkeling in die rivier uit te sny, en is gevang. Nie deur die leer nie, maar deur ’n verwaande

ou gek wat beheer het oor ’n kleinerige kasteel wat Miraz se laaste vesting langs die kus is. Ek hoef julle nie te vertel dat hulle niks uit my kon kry nie, maar ek is ’n dwerg en dit was genoeg. Krewe en katlagters! Dis ’n genade die hofmeester is ’n hoogdrawende ou gek. Enigie- mand anders sou my daar en dan doodgesteek het. Maar niks buiten ’n groot teregstelling sou vir hom deug nie: ek is met voile seremonie weggestuur ‘spoke toe’. En toe het hierdie jong dame,” (hy knik na Susan) “haar boog laat praat - en dit was deksels goeie skietwerk, dit moet ek erken - en hier is ons. Maar sonder my wapenrusting, want hulle het dit natuurlik afgevat.” Hy klop sy pyp uit en maak dit weer vol.

“Liewe land!” sê Peter. “Dan was dit die horing — jou eie horing, Su — wat ons gisteroggend van daardie bank op die perron afgetrek het! Ek kan dit skaars glo, maar dit maak alles sin.”

“Ek weet nie hoekom jy dit nie kan glo nie,” sê Lucy. “Jy glo dan kamma in toorkunste. Is daar nie baie stories oor hoe die towerkuns mense uit een plek - uit een wêreld - na ’n ander gedwing het nie? Ek bedoel, as ’n towenaar in *Die Arabiese Nagte* ’n djin oproep, dan moet hy kom. Ons moes hierheen kom, en klaar.”

“Ja,” sê Peter, “dit voel seker so snaaks omdat dit al- tyd iemand in *ons* wêreld is wat die roepwerk doen.

’n Mens dink nie eintlik aan waar die djin *vandaan* kom

.

nie.”

“En nou weet ons hoe dit vir ’n djin moet voel,” sê Edmund met ’n laggie. “Goeiste! Dis half aardig om te weet *ons* kan sommer so fluit-fluit opgetower word. Dis erger as wat Pa altyd sê oor aan die genade van die telefoon oorgelewer te wees.”

“Maar ons wil tog hier wees,” sê Lucy, “as Aslan ons hier wil hê?”

“Intussen,” sê die dwerg, “moet ons besluit wat om te doen. Ek moet

seker na koning Kaspian toe teruggaan en vir hom sê daar het g'n hulp opgedaag nie."

"G'n hulp nie?" sê Susan. "Maar dit *het* gewerk. Ons is hier."

"Hm - hm — ja, vir seker. Ek sien so," sê die dwerg en dit lyk asof sy pyp skielik verstop geraak het, want hy is vreeslik besig om dit skoon te maak. "Maar - wel - ek bedoel - "

"Maar sien jy nog nie wie ons is nie?" skree Lucy. "Jy is *regtig* dom."

"Julle is seker die vier kinders uit die ou stories," sê Trumpels. "Natuurlik is ek baie bly om julle te ontmoet. En dis beslis vreeslik interessant. Maar — ek wil nie aan- stoot gee nie," — en hy aarsel weer.

"Kry tog end en sê jou sê," sê Edmund.

"Wel - moet my nie kwalik neem nie," sê Trumpels. "Maar, weet julle, die koning en Truffelsoeker en doktor Kornelius verwag eintlik — wel, as julle sal verstaan wat ek bedoel - hulp. Om dit anders te stel, ek dink hulle sien julle as groot krygers. Verstaan my mooi — ons is vreeslik lief vir kinders en alles, maar op hierdie oomblik, in die middel van 'n oorlog — maar ek is seker julle verstaan."

"Jy bedoel jy dink ons is nie goed genoeg nie," sê Edmund en hy raak rooi in die gesig.

"Moet asseblief nie kwaad word nie," val die dwerg hom in die rede. "Ek verseker julle, my liewe klein vriendjies - "

"Jy's 'n mooi een om van *klein* te praat!" sê Edmund en spring op. "Jy glo seker ook nie ons het die Slag van

Beruna gewen nie? Wel, jy kan sê wat jy wil van my, want ek weet - "

"Dit gaan nie help om ons humeure te verloor nie," sê Peter. "Kom ons gee vir hom nuwe wapenrusting en kry ons s'n ook uit die skatkamer en dan praat ons weer."

"Wat sal dit help - " begin Edmund, maar Lucy fluis- ter in sy oor, "Moet ons nie liewer doen wat Peter sê nie?"

Hy is die hoofkoning en ek dink hy het 'n plan." Edmund bedink hom en met behulp van sy flitslig loop hulle al- mal, insluitende Trumpels, met die trappe af en gaan die koue donkerte en stowwerige praal van die skatkamer binne.

Toe hy die skatte sien wat op die rakke lê, glinster die dwerg se oë (hoewel hy op sy tone moet staan) en hy prewel by homself, "Dit sal nooit deug om Nikabrik dit alles te laat sien nie." Hulle vind sonder te veel moeite vir hom wapenrusting: 'n maliekoldertuniek, 'n swaard, 'n helm, 'n skild, 'n boog en 'n koker vol pyle, alles in dwerggrootte. Die koperhelm is vol robyne en daar is goud op die swaard se hef. Trumpels het nog nooit in sy lewe soveel weelde gesien nie, wat nog te sê aangehad. Die kinders trek ook

maliekoldertunieke aan en sit helmets op. Hulle kry 'n swaard en skild vir Edmund en 'n boog vir Lucy. Peter en Susan dra uit die aard van die saak reeds hul geskenke. Toe hulle weer rinkelend in hul maliekolder met die trappe opstap, lyk en voel hulle al klaar meer soos Narniane en minder soos skoolkinders. Die twee seuns stap agter en beraam oënskynlik planne. Lucy hoor Edmund sê, “Nee, laat ek dit doen. Dit sal vir hom erger wees as ek wen en vir ons minder van 'n vernedering as ek verloor.”

“Reg so, Ed,” sê Peter.

Toe hulle buite in die daglik kom, gaan Edmund na die dwerg en sê baie beleef, “Daar is iets wat ek wil vra. Kinders soos ons kry nie dikwels die kans om 'n groot stryder soos jy te ontmoet nie. Wat van 'n ligte skerm- krygsman teen my? Dit sal verskriklik gaaf wees.”

“Maar boet,” sê die dwerg, “hierdie swaarde is skerp.” “Ek weet,” sê Edmund. “Maar ek sal tog nie naby jou kom nie en jy's heeltemal slim genoeg om my te ont- wapen sonder om my seer te maak.”

“Dis 'n gevaarlike speletjie,” sê Trumpels. “Maar aan- gesien jy daarop aandrung, kan ons seker maar so maak.” Binne 'n oomblik is beide swaarde getrek en die ander drie spring op die platform van waar hulle staan en kyk. Dis dit werd. Dis nie soos die verspotte gevegte met slagswaarde wat 'n mens op die verhoog sien nie. Dis nie eens soos die rapiergevegte wat soms effens beter gedoen word nie. Dis 'n egte slagswaard-tweegeveg. Die groot ding is om jou vyand se bene en voete te tref, omdat daardie dele nie met wapenrusting bedek is nie. En wan- neer hy na joune slaan, moet jy met albei voete hoog die lug in spring sodat die hou onder jou bene verbygaan. Dit is vir die dwerg 'n voordeel, want Edmund is langer as hy en moet feitlik die hele tyd vooroor buig. Ek dink nie Edmund sou 'n kans gehad het as hy vier-en-twintig uur gelede teen Trumpels moes veg nie. Maar sedert hul aankoms op die eiland het die Narniaanse lug 'n uitwer- king op hom gehad en al sy ou gevegte kom na hom terug, en sy arms en vingers onthou die ou vaardighede. Hy is weer koning Edmund. Om en om sirkel die twee vegters, hou na hou dien hulle toe, en Susan (wat hierdie soort ding nooit leer doen het nie) skree, “O, wees tog versigtig!” En toe, so vinnig dat niemand eintlik kan sien hoe dit gebeur nie (tensy hulle soos Peter geweet het nie), flits Edmund se swaard met 'n eienaardige draaibe- weging - die dwerg s'n vlieg uit sy greep en Trumpels wring sy leë hand soos 'n mens na 'n besonder harde bal teen 'n krieketkolf maak.

“Ek hoop jy't nie seergekry nie, my liewe klein vriend- jie,” sê Edmund wat effens blaas terwyl hy sy swaard in sy skede steek.

“Ek kry die boodskap,” sê Trumpels droogweg. “Jy ken 'n kunsie wat ek

nog nie geleer het nie.”

“Dis heeltemal waar,” voeg Peter by. “Die beste swaardvegter in die wêreld kan met ’n truuk wat hy nie ken nie, ontwapen word. Ek dink dis net billik dat ons vir Trumpels ’n kans teen iets anders gee. Wil jy nie teen my suster skyfskiet nie? Daar is mos geen truuks in die boogskietkuns nie.”

“A, julle grappmakers,” sê die dwerg. “Ek begin sien wat aangaan. Asof ek nie weet hoe sy kan skiet na wat vanoggend gebeur het nie. Maar goed, goed, ek sal probeer.” Hy klink ongeërg, maar sy oë skitter, want onder sy mense is hy ’n beroemde boogskutter.

Al vyf van hulle gaan uit binnehof toe.

“Wat gaan die teiken wees?” vra Peter.

“Ek dink daardie appel wat daar aan ’n tak oor die muur hang, sal deug” sê Susan.

“Dit sal goed deug, meisiekind,” sê Trumpels. “Jy be- doel daardie gele daar naby die middel van die suile- boog?”

“Nee, nie daardie een nie,” sê Susan. “Die rooie daar bo - by die kantele.”

Die dwerg se gesig val. “Lyk meer soos ’n kersie as ’n appel,” brom hy onderlangs.

Hulle gooi ’n munt op vir die eerste skoot (wat Trumpels baie interesseer, want hy het nog nooit tevore gesien hoe dit gedoen word nie) en Susan verloor. Hulle gaan bo van die trappe wat uit die saal na die binnehof lei, af skiet. Die manier waarop die dwerg stelling inneem en sy boog hanteer, maak dit duidelik dat hy weet wat hy doen.

Tweng gaan die snaar. Dis ’n uitstekende skoot. Die klein appeltjie skud toe die pyl verbygaan en ’n blaar fladder grond toe. Toe gaan Susan na die bopunt van die trappe en span haar boog.

Sy geniet die uitdaging nie naastenby soveel soos Edmund syne geniet nie - nie omdat sy twyfel dat sy die appel kan raakskiet nie, maar omdat Susan se hart so klein is dat sy dit nie kan verdra om iemand wat alreeds verloor het, uit te stof nie. Die dwerg hou haar fyn dop toe sy die snaar tot by haar oortrek. ’n Oomblik later, met ’n sagte plofgeluid wat almal van hulle in daardie stil plek kan hoor, val die appel gras toe met Susan se pyl daarin.

“O skote, Su!” roep die ander uit.

“Ek is nie regtig beter as jy nie,” sê Susan vir die dwerg. “Ek dink daar was ’n ligte windjie toe jy geskiet het.”

“Nee, daar was nie,” sê Trumpels. “Moenie sulke goed sê nie. Ek weet wanneer ek behoorlik uitgestof is. Daar- om noem ek dit nie eens dat ’n ou wond se litteken my ’n bietjie vang wanneer ek my arm ver terugtrek - ”

“O, is jy gewond?” vra Lucy. “Laat ek sien.”

“Dis nie iets vir klein dogtertjies om te sien nie,” begin Trumpels, maar dan betuel hy hom skielik. “Daar praat ek al weer soos ’n ou gek,” sê hy. “Jy kan seker net so- wel ’n groot snydokter wees as wat jou broer ’n groot swaardvegter en jou suster ’n groot boogskutter is.” Hy gaan sit op die trappe en trek sy maliekoldertuniek af, glip uit sy klein hempie en ontbloot ’n arm wat net so harig en gespierd soos ’n matroos s’n is, hoewel dit nie veel groter as ’n kind s’n is nie. Daar is ’n lomp verband om die skouer wat Lucy begin afrol. Die sny daaronder lyk na en is lelik geswel.

“O, arme Trumpels,” sê Lucy. “Hoe aaklig.” Toe laat val sy een enkele druppel van die versterkende medisyne uit haar flessie daarop.

“Maskas. Hm? Wat het jy gedoen?” vra Trumpels. Maar hoe hy ook al sy kop draai en skeel kyk en sy baard heen en weer vee, hy kan sy eie skouer nie sien nie. Toe bevoel hy dit so goed as hy kan deur sy arms en vingers in baie snaakse posisies te draai net soos wanneer jy ’n plek wat buite bereik is, wil krap. Daarna swaai hy sy arm en lig dit en toets die spiere, en uiteindelik spring hy orent en skree, “Reuse en rissies! Dis gesond! Dis so goed soos nuut.” En hy bars uit van die lag en sê, “Wel, ek het omtrent ’n gek van myself gemaak. Geen kwade gevoelens nie, hoop ek? My beskeie dienste is tot u Ma- jesteite se beskikking — beskeie dienste. En dankie vir my lewe, my gesondheid, my ontbyt - en my les.”

Al die kinders sê nie te danke en alles is in orde.

“En nou,” sê Peter, “as jy nou regtig besluit het om in ons te glo — ”

“Ek het,” sê die dwerg.

“Is dit duidelik wat ons moet doen. Ons moet dadelik by koning Kaspian gaan aansluit.”

“Hoe gouer, hoe beter,” sê Trumpels. “My sotterny het ons al meer as ’n uur gekos.”

“Dis omtrent twee dae se reis met die roete waarlangs jy gekom het,” sê Peter. “Vir ons, bedoel ek. Ons kan nie dag en nag loop soos julle dwerge nie.” Dan draai hy na die ander. “Wat Trumpels Aslan se Hoop noem, moet die Steentafel wees. Onthou julle, dit was ongeveer ’n halwe dag se stap, of selfs ’n bietjie minder, van daar af na die Drif van Beruna - ”

“Ons noem dit Beruna se Brug,” sê Trumpels.

“Daar was nie in ons tyd ’n brug nie,” sê Peter. “En van Beruna tot hier onder is nog ’n dag en ’n bietjie. Ons het altyd teen teetyd van die tweede dag tuisgekom, teen ’n gemaklike pas. As ons vinnig loop, behoort ons die hele ding in ’n dag en ’n half te kan doen.”

“Maar onthou, daar’s nou oral woude,” se Trumpels, “en daar’s ’n vyand om te ontwyk.”

“Hoor hier,” sê Edmund, “moet ons dieselfde pad neem as waarlangs ons Liewe Klein Vriendjie gekom het?”

“Hou tog op, u Majesteit, as jy my liefhet,” sê die dwerg.

“Goed dan,” sê Edmund. “Mag ons LKV sê?”

“Ag, Edmund,” sê Susan. “Moenie so *aanhou* nie.”

“Dit maak nie saak nie, meisiekind - ek bedoel, u Majesteit,” sê Trumpels met ’n laggie. “Grappies gee nie blase nie.” (En van toe af het hulle hom die LKV genoem, tot hulle amper vergeet het wat dit beteken.)

“Soos ek gesê het,” gaan Edmund voort, “ons hoef nie daarlangs te gaan nie. Hoekom roei ons nie suidwaarts tot by die Glaswaterrivier en daarmee verder op nie? Dit sal ons tot agter die Steentafel bring en solank ons ter see is, sal ons veilig wees. As ons nou dadelik vertrek, sal ons voor donker by die Glaswater wees, ’n paar uur slaap inkry en vroeg móreoggend by Kaspian opdaag.”

“Hoe wonderlik is dit nie as ’n mens die kus ken nie,” sê Trumpels. “Nie een van ons weet enigiets van Glaswater af nie.”

“Wat van kos?” vra Susan.

“O, ons sal maar net met appels moet klaarkom,” sê Lucy. “Kom ons gaan. Ons het nog niks gedoen nie en ons is al amper twee dae hier.”

“En in elk geval, niemand gaan my hoed weer vir ’n vismandjie gebruik nie,” sê Edmund.

Hulle gebruik een van die reënjasse as ’n soort sak en sit ’n klomp appels daarin. Toe drink almal soveel moontlik water by die put (want daar sal niks meer vars water wees voor hulle nie by die rivier aankom nie) en gaan af na die boot toe. Die kinders is jammer om Kair Paravel agter te laat, want selfs in dié vervalle toestand het dit reeds weer soos hul tuiste begin voel.

“Die LKV moet eerder stuur,” sê Peter, “en ek en Ed sal elk ’n spaan vat. Maar wag ’n bietjie. Ons moet ons maliekolder uittrek: ons gaan baie warm kry van die roeiery. Julie meisies moet in die boeg sit en vir die LKV aanwysings skree, want hy ken nie die pad nie. Julie moet ons ’n goeie ent die see in kry tot ons anderkant die eiland is.”

Kort daarna begin die groen, beboste kus van die eiland agter hulle wegval; sy klein baaitjies en landpunte begin platter lyk, en die boot wieg op en af oor die kalm deinings. Die see word al groter om hulle en lyk in die verte blouer, hoewel dit om die boot groen en vol skuim is. Alles ruik na sout en daar is geen geluid behalwe die gesuis van water en die geklots teen die kante en die roeispane se geplas en die roeimikke se stampgeluide nie. Die son word warm.

Dit is vir Lucy en Susan heerlik om in die boeg te sit en oor die kant te

hang en te probeer om hul hande in die see te kry, al kan hulle nie daarby uitkom nie. Onder hulle sien hulle die bodem van amper suiwer, bleek sand met hier en daar pers kolle seegras.

“Dis nes die Outyd,” sê Lucy. “Onthou julle ons reis na Terebinthia - en Galma - en die Sewe Eilande - en die Eilande van Verlatenheid?”

“Ja,” sê Susan, “en ons puik skip die *Gladde Seespieël* met die swanekop op die boeg en die gekurfde swane- vlerke wat na agter tot amper by die middel gegaan het?”

“En die seile van sy en die groot lanterns by die agter- stewe?”

“En die feeste op die agterdek en die musikante.”

“Onthou jy toe ons die musikante bo in die takelwerk laat fluit speel het sodat dit moes klink asof die musiek uit die hemel kom?”

’n Rukkie later neem Susan Edmund se roeispaaan oor en hy kom vorentoe om by Lucy te sit. Hulle is nou reeds verby die eiland en hou nader aan die kus, wat bebos en verlate is. Hulle sou gedink het dis ’n mooi plek as hulle nie die tye toe dit oop en lugtig en vol vrolike vriende was, onthou het nie.

“Sjoe! Dis harde werk,” sê Peter.

“Laat ek ’n bietjie roei,” bied Lucy aan.

“Die spane is te groot vir jou,” sê Peter kortaf, nie omdat hy kwaad is nie, maar omdat hy nie krag oorhet om op praat te mors nie.

CHAPTER NINE

WHAT LUCY SAW

SUSAN AND THE TWO BOYS WERE BITTERLY tired with rowing before they rounded the last headland and began the final pull up Glasswater itself, and Lucy's head ached from the long hours of sun and the glare on the water. Even Trumpkin longed for the voyage to be over. The seat on which he sat to steer had been made for men, not Dwarfs, and his feet did not reach the floor-boards; and everyone knows how uncomfortable that is even for ten minutes. And as they all grew more tired, their spirits fell. Up till now the children had only been thinking of how to get to Caspian. Now they wondered what they would do when they found him, and how a handful of Dwarfs and woodland creatures could defeat an army of grown-up Humans.

Twilight was coming on as they rowed slowly up the windings of Glasswater Creek—a twilight which deepened as the banks drew closer together and the overhanging trees began almost to meet overhead. It was very quiet in here as the sound of the sea died away behind them; they could even hear the trickle of the little streams that poured down from the forest into Glasswater.

They went ashore at last, far too tired to attempt lighting a fire; and even a supper of apples (though most of them felt that they never wanted to see an apple again) seemed better than trying to catch or shoot anything. After a little silent munching they all huddled down together in the moss and dead leaves between four large beech trees.

Everyone except Lucy went to sleep at once. Lucy, being far less tired, found it hard to get comfortable. Also, she had forgotten till now that all Dwarfs snore. She knew that one of the best ways of getting to sleep is to stop trying, so she opened her eyes. Through a gap in the bracken and branches she could just see a patch of water in the Creek and the sky above it. Then, with a thrill of memory, she saw again, after all those years, the bright Narnian stars. She had once known them better than the stars of our own world, because as a Queen in Narnia she had gone to bed much later than as a child in England. And there they were—at least, three of the summer constellations could be seen from where she lay: the Ship, the Hammer, and the Leopard. "Dear old Leopard," she murmured happily to herself.

Instead of getting drowsier she was getting more awake—with an odd night-time, dreamish kind of wakefulness. The Creek was growing brighter. She knew now that the moon was on it, though she couldn't see the moon. And now she began to feel that the whole forest was coming awake like herself. Hardly knowing why she did it, she got up quickly and walked a little distance away from their bivouac.



"This is lovely," said Lucy to herself. It was cool and fresh; delicious smells were floating everywhere. Somewhere close by she heard the twitter of a nightingale beginning to sing, then stopping, then beginning again. It was a little lighter ahead. She went toward the light and came to a place where there were fewer trees, and whole patches or pools of moonlight, but the moonlight and the shadows so mixed that you could hardly be sure where anything was or what it was. At the same moment the nightingale, satisfied at last with his tuning up, burst into full song.

Lucy's eyes began to grow accustomed to the light, and she saw the trees that were nearest her more distinctly. A great longing for the old days when the trees could talk in Narnia came over her. She knew exactly how each of these trees would talk if only she could wake them, and what sort of human form it would put on. She looked at a silver birch: it would have a soft, showery voice and would look like a slender girl, with hair blown all about her face, and fond of dancing. She looked at the oak: he would be a wizened, but hearty old man with a frizzled beard and warts on his face and hands, and hair growing out of the warts. She looked at the beech under which she was standing. Ah!—she would be the best of all. She would be a gracious goddess, smooth and stately, the lady of the wood.

"Oh Trees, Trees, Trees," said Lucy (though she had not been intending to speak at all). "Oh Trees, wake, wake, wake. Don't you remember it? Don't you remember *me*? Dryads and Hamadryads, come out, come to me."



Though there was not a breath of wind they all stirred about her. The rustling noise of the leaves was almost like words. The nightingale stopped singing as if to listen to it. Lucy felt that at any moment she would begin to understand what the trees were trying to say. But the

moment did not come. The rustling died away. The nightingale resumed its song. Even in the moonlight the wood looked more ordinary again. Yet Lucy had the feeling (as you sometimes have when you are trying to remember a name or a date and almost get it, but it vanishes before you really do) that she had just missed something: as if she had spoken to the trees a split second too soon or a split second too late, or used all the right words except one, or put in one word that was just wrong.

Quite suddenly she began to feel tired. She went back to the bivouac, snuggled down between Susan and Peter, and was asleep in a few minutes.

It was a cold and cheerless waking for them all next morning, with a gray twilight in the wood (for the sun had not yet risen) and everything damp and dirty.

"Apples, heigh-ho," said Trumpkin with a rueful grin. "I must say you ancient kings and queens don't overfeed your courtiers!"

They stood up and shook themselves and looked about. The trees were thick and they could see no more than a few yards in any direction.

"I suppose your Majesties know the way all right?" said the Dwarf.

"I don't," said Susan. "I've never seen these woods in my life before. In fact I thought all along that we ought to have gone by the river."

"Then I think you might have said so at the time," answered Peter, with pardonable sharpness.

"Oh, don't take any notice of her," said Edmund. "She always is a wet blanket. You've got that pocket compass of yours, Peter, haven't you? Well, then, we're as right as rain. We've only got to keep on going northwest—cross that little river, the what-do-you-call-it?—the Rush—"

"I know," said Peter. "The one that joins the big river at the Fords of Beruna, or Beruna's Bridge, as the D.L.F. calls it."

"That's right. Cross it and strike uphill, and we'll be at the Stone Table (Aslan's How, I mean) by eight or nine o'clock. I hope King Caspian will give us a good breakfast!"

"I hope you're right," said Susan. "I can't remember all that at all."

"That's the worst of girls," said Edmund to Peter and the Dwarf. "They never carry a map in their heads."

"That's because our heads have something inside them," said Lucy.

At first things seemed to be going pretty well. They even thought they had struck an old path; but if you know anything about woods, you will know that one is always finding imaginary paths. They disappear after about five minutes and then you think you have found another (and hope it is not another but more of the same one) and it also

disappears, and after you have been well lured out of your right direction you realize that none of them were paths at all. The boys and the Dwarf, however, were used to woods and were not taken in for more than a few seconds.

They had plodded on for about half an hour (three of them very stiff from yesterday's rowing) when Trumpkin suddenly whispered, "Stop." They all stopped. "There's something following us," he said in a low voice. "Or rather, something keeping up with us: over there on the left." They all stood still, listening and staring till their ears and eyes ached. "You and I'd better each have an arrow on the string," said Susan to Trumpkin. The Dwarf nodded, and when both bows were ready for action the party went on again.

They went a few dozen yards through fairly open woodland, keeping a sharp look-out. Then they came to a place where the undergrowth thickened and they had to pass nearer to it. Just as they were passing the place, there came a sudden something that snarled and flashed, rising out from the breaking twigs like a thunderbolt. Lucy was knocked down and winded, hearing the twang of a bowstring as she fell. When she was able to take notice of things again, she saw a great grim-looking gray bear lying dead with Trumpkin's arrow in its side.

"The D.L.F. beat you in *that* shooting match, Su," said Peter, with a slightly forced smile. Even he had been shaken by this adventure.

"I—I left it too late," said Susan, in an embarrassed voice. "I was so afraid it might be, you know—one of our kind of bears, a *talking bear*." She hated killing things.

"That's the trouble of it," said Trumpkin, "when most of the beasts have gone enemy and gone dumb, but there are still some of the other kind left. You never know, and you daren't wait to see."

"Poor old Bruin," said Susan. "You don't think he *was*?"

"Not he," said the Dwarf. "I saw the face and I heard the snarl. He only wanted Little Girl for his breakfast. And talking of breakfast, I didn't want to discourage your Majesties when you said you hoped King Caspian would give you a good one: but meat's precious scarce in camp. And there's good eating on a bear. It would be a shame to leave the carcass without taking a bit, and it won't delay us more than half an hour. I dare say you two youngsters—Kings, I should say—know how to skin a bear?"

"Let's go and sit down a fair way off," said Susan to Lucy. "I know what a horrid messy business *that* will be." Lucy shuddered and nodded. When they had sat down she said: "Such a horrible idea has come into my head, Su."

"What's that?"

"Wouldn't it be dreadful if some day in our own world, at home, men started going wild inside, like the animals here, and still looked like

men, so that you'd never know which were which?"

"We've got enough to bother about here and now in Narnia," said the practical Susan, "without imagining things like that."

When they rejoined the boys and the Dwarf, as much as they thought they could carry of the best meat had been cut off. Raw meat is not a nice thing to fill one's pockets with, but they folded it up in fresh leaves and made the best of it. They were all experienced enough to know that they would feel quite differently about these squashy and unpleasant parcels when they had walked long enough to be really hungry.

On they trudged again (stopping to wash three pairs of hands that needed it in the first stream they passed) until the sun rose and the birds began to sing, and more flies than they wanted were buzzing in the bracken. The stiffness from yesterday's rowing began to wear off. Everybody's spirits rose. The sun grew warmer and they took their helmets off and carried them.

"I suppose we *are* going right?" said Edmund about an hour later.

"I don't see how we can go wrong as long as we don't bear too much to the left," said Peter. "If we bear too much to the right, the worst that can happen is wasting a little time by striking the great River too soon and not cutting off the corner."

And again they trudged on with no sound except the thud of their feet and the jingle of their chain shirts.

"Where's this bally Rush got to?" said Edmund a good deal later.

"I certainly thought we'd have struck it by now," said Peter. "But there's nothing to do but keep on." They both knew that the Dwarf was looking anxiously at them, but he said nothing.

And still they trudged on and their mail shirts began to feel very hot and heavy.

"What on earth?" said Peter suddenly.

They had come, without seeing it, almost to the edge of a small precipice from which they looked down into a gorge with a river at the bottom. On the far side the cliffs rose much higher. None of the party except Edmund (and perhaps Trumpkin) was a rock climber.

"I'm sorry," said Peter. "It's my fault for coming this way. We're lost. I've never seen this place in my life before."

The Dwarf gave a low whistle between his teeth.

"Oh, do let's go back and go the other way," said Susan. "I knew all along we'd get lost in these woods."

"Susan!" said Lucy, reproachfully, "don't nag at Peter like that. It's so rotten, and he's doing all he can."

"And don't you snap at Su like that, either," said Edmund. "I think she's quite right."

"Tubs and tortoiseshells!" exclaimed Trumpkin. "If we've got lost

coming, what chance have we of finding our way back? And if we're to go back to the Island and begin all over again—even supposing we could—we might as well give the whole thing up. Miraz will have finished with Caspian before we get there at that rate."

"You think we ought to go on?" said Lucy.

"I'm not sure the High King *is* lost," said Trumpkin. "What's to hinder this river being the Rush?"

"Because the Rush is not in a gorge," said Peter, keeping his temper with some difficulty.

"Your Majesty says *is*," replied the Dwarf, "but oughtn't you to say *was*? You knew this country hundreds—it may be a thousand—years ago. Mayn't it have changed? A landslide might have pulled off half the side of that hill, leaving bare rock, and there are your precipices beyond the gorge. Then the Rush might go on deepening its course year after year till you get the little precipices this side. Or there might have been an earthquake, or anything."

"I never thought of that," said Peter.

"And anyway," continued Trumpkin, "even if this is not the Rush, it's flowing roughly north and so it must fall into the Great River anyway. I think I passed something that might have been it, on my way down. So if we go downstream, to our right, we'll hit the Great River. Perhaps not so high as we'd hoped, but at least we'll be no worse off than if you'd come my way."

"Trumpkin, you're a brick," said Peter. "Come on, then. Down this side of the gorge."

"Look! Look! Look!" cried Lucy.

"Where? What?" asked everyone.

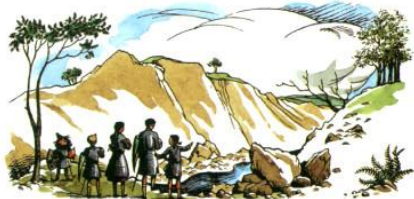
"The Lion," said Lucy. "Aslan himself. Didn't you see?" Her face had changed completely and her eyes shone.

"Do you really mean—?" began Peter.

"Where did you think you saw him?" asked Susan.

"Don't talk like a grown-up," said Lucy, stamping her foot. "I didn't *think* I saw him. I saw him."

"Where, Lu?" asked Peter.



"Right up there between those mountain ashes. No, this side of the gorge. And up, not down. Just the opposite of the way you want to go. And he wanted us to go where he was—up there."

"How do you know that was what he wanted?" asked Edmund.

"He—I—I just know," said Lucy, "by his face."

The others all looked at each other in puzzled silence.

"Her Majesty may well have seen a lion," put in Trumpkin. "There are lions in these woods, I've been told. But it needn't have been a friendly and talking lion any more than the bear was a friendly and talking bear."

"Oh, don't be so stupid," said Lucy. "Do you think I don't know Aslan when I see him?"

"He'd be a pretty elderly lion by now," said Trumpkin, "if he's one you knew when you were here before! And if it could be the same one, what's to prevent him having gone wild and witless like so many others?"

Lucy turned crimson and I think she would have flown at Trumpkin, if Peter had not laid his hand on her arm. "The D.L.F. doesn't understand. How could he? You must just take it, Trumpkin, that we do really know about Aslan; a little bit about him, I mean. And you mustn't talk about him like that again. It isn't lucky for one thing; and it's all nonsense for another. The only question is whether Aslan was really there."

"But I know he was," said Lucy, her eyes filling with tears.

"Yes, Lu, but we don't, you see," said Peter.

"There's nothing for it but a vote," said Edmund.

"All right," replied Peter. "You're the eldest, D.L.F. What do you vote for? Up or down?"

"Down," said the Dwarf. "I know nothing about Aslan. But I do know that if we turn left and follow the gorge up, it might lead us all day before we found a place where we could cross it. Whereas if we turn right and go down, we're bound to reach the Great River in about a couple of hours. And if there *are* any real lions about, we want to go away from them, not toward them."

"What do you say, Susan?"

"Don't be angry, Lu," said Susan, "but I do think we should go down. I'm dead tired. Do let's get out of this wretched wood into the open as quick as we can. And none of us except you saw *anything*."

"Edmund?" said Peter.

"Well, there's just this," said Edmund, speaking quickly and turning a little red. "When we first discovered Narnia a year ago—or a thousand years ago, whichever it is—it was Lucy who discovered it first and none of us would believe her. I was the worst of the lot, I know. Yet she was right after all. Wouldn't it be fair to believe her this time? I vote for going up."

"Oh, Ed!" said Lucy, and seized his hand.

"And now it's your turn, Peter," said Susan, "and I do hope—"

"Oh, shut up, shut up and let a chap think," interrupted Peter. "I'd

much rather not have to vote.”

“You’re the High King,” said Trumpkin sternly.

“Down,” said Peter after a long pause. “I know Lucy may be right after all, but I can’t help it. We must do one or the other.”

So they set off to their right along the edge, downstream. And Lucy came last of the party, crying bitterly.

Hoofstuk 9

Wat Lucy sien



Susan en die twee seuns is bitter moeg geroei voor hulle om die laaste landpunt gaan en teen die Glas- water begin opbeweeg, en Lucy se kop is seer van die lang ure in die son en die glinstering op die water. Selfs Trumpels wens die reis is al verby. Die bankie waarop hy sit en stuur, is vir mense gemaak, nie vir dwerge nie; sy voete kan nie aan die vloerplanke raak nie en almal weet hoe ongemaklik dit selfs vir tien minute is. Hoe moeër hulle word, hoe moedeloos voel hulle. Tot nou toe het die kinders net gewonder hoe om by Kaspian te kom. Nou wonder hulle wat hulle gaan doen as hulle hom kry en hoe ’n hand vol dwerge en wouddiere ’n hele weermag bestaande uit volwasse mense gaan verslaan.

Dis besig om skemer te word terwyl hulle stadig met die kronkelende Glaswaterrivier op roei - ’n aandskeme- ring wat verdiep as die rivierwalle al nader aan mekaar kom en die oorhangende bome amper bo hul koppe ontmoet. Dit raak al hoe stiller noudat die geluid van die see agter hulle verdof. Hulle hoor selfs die gemurmur van die klein stroompies wat deur die woud na Glas- water vloei.

Uiteindelik gaan hulle aan wal, te moeg om eens te probeer om ’n vuur aan te steek en selfs ’n aandete van appels (hoewel die meeste van hulle voel hulle wil nooit weer ’n appel sien nie) voel beter as om iets te probeer vang of skiet. Na ’n stil gepeusel gaan sit hulle saam op die mos en dooie blare tussen vier groot beukebome.

Almal behalwe Lucy raak dadelik aan die slaap. Lucy is glad nie so moeg soos die res nie en sy vind dit moei- lik om gemaklik te raak. Sy het ook tot nou toe vergeet dat alle dwerge snork. Sy weet een van die beste maniere om aan die slaap te raak, is om nie te probeer nie, dus maak sy haar oë oop. Deur ’n opening in die varings en takke kan sy net-net ’n strook rivierwater en die lug daar- bo sien. Toe, met ’n opgewonde tinteling, sien sy na al die jare weer

die helder Narniaanse sterre. Daar was 'n tyd toe sy hulle beter as haar eie wêreld se sterre geken het, omdat sy as koningin van Narnia baie later as enige kind in Engeland gaan slaap het. En daar is hulle — uiteinde-lik. Van waar sy lê, kan sy ten minste drie van die somer-konstellasies sien: die Skip, die Hamer en die Luiperd. “Liewe ou Luiperd,” prewel sy tevrede teenoor haarself.

Pleks dat sy moeër word, word sy al wakkerder — dis 'n vreemde nagtelike, dromerige soort wakker wees. Die rivier word helderder. Sy weet die maan skyn nou daar-op, hoewel sy die maan nie kan sien nie. En nou begin sy voel die hele bos is besig om wakker te word, net soos sy. Sy weet nie eintlik hoekom sy dit doen nie, maar sy staan op en loop 'n entjie van hul kampeerplek af weg.

“Dit is so mooi,” sê Lucy vir haarself. Dit is koel en vars; heerlike geure sweef oraloor. Iewers naby hoor sy die getjilp van 'n nagtegaal wat begin sing, ophou en weer begin. Dit is effens ligter voor haar. Sy stap na die lig en kom by 'n plek waar daar minder bome is en groot kolle of poele maanlig, maar die maanlig en die skadu-wees is so vermeng dat 'n mens nie seker is wáár iets is, of wát dit is nie. Op dieselfde oomblik begin die nagtegaal, uiteindelik tevrede met sy opwarming, uit volle bors sing.

Lucy se oë raak nou gewoon aan die lig en sy sien die bome om haar nou duideliker. 'n Groot verlange na die ou dae toe die bome in Narnia kon praat, kom oor haar. Sy weet presies hoe elkeen van hierdie bome sou klink as sy hulle net kon wakker maak, en watter soort menslike gedaante elkeen sou aanneem. Lucy kyk na 'n silwer berkeboom: sy sal 'n sagte, vertonerige soort stem hê en soos 'n jong meisie lyk wat ronddans met hare wat om haar gesig waai. Sy kyk na die eik: hy sal 'n beplooide, maar hartlike ou man wees met 'n kroes baard en vratte op sy gesig en hande, en hare wat uit die vratte groei. Sy kyk na die beuk waaronder sy staan. A! - sy sal die beste van almal wees. Sy sal 'n grasiëuse godin wees, slank en statig, die dame van die woud.

“O, bome, bome, bome,” sê Lucy, hoewel sy glad nie van plan was om te praat nie. “O, bome, word wakker, word wakker, word wakker. Onthou julle nie? Onthou julle nie vir *my* nie? Bosnimfe en boomnimfe, kom uit, kom na my toe.”

Hoewel daar nie 'n briesie is nie, is daar 'n ritseling om haar. Die geruis van die blare is amper soos woorde. Die nagtegaal hou op sing asof hy ook daarna luister. Lucy voel sy gaan enige oomblik verstaan wat die bome probeer sê. Maar die oomblik kom nie. Die geritsel sterf weg. Die nagtegaal begin weer sing. Selfs in die maanlig lyk die woud weer gewoon. Tog kry Lucy die gevoel (soos jy soms kry wanneer jy 'n naam of 'n datum probeer

onthou en dit amper het voor dit weer wegraak) dat sy iets net-net gemis het, asof sy 'n breukdeel van 'n sekonde te vroeg of te laat met die bome begin praat het, of sy al die regte woorde behalwe één gebruik het, of een woord wat net effens verkeerd was, ingesit het.

Skielik voel sy baie moeg. Sy gaan terug na hul kam- peerplek, kruip tussen Susan en Peter in en raak binne 'n paar minute aan die slaap.

Dis die volgende oggend vir hulle almal 'n koue en vreugdelose ontwaking, met 'n gryskemering in die woud (want die son is nog nie op nie) en alles wat klam en vuil is.

“Appels, arrie!” sê Trumpels met 'n droewige laggie. “Ek moet sê, julle oeroue konings en koninginne voer jul howelinge nie juis vet nie.”

Hulle staan op, skud hulleself en kyk om hulle rond. Die bome groei so dig op mekaar dat hulle net 'n paar tree in enige rigting kan sien.

“Ek skat jul Majesteite ken die pad?” sê die dwerg.

“Nie ek nie,” sê Susan. “Ek het hierdie woude nog nooit in my hele lewe gesien nie. Om die waarheid te sê, ek het nog die hele tyd gedink ons moes die rivier gevolg het.”

“Dan moes jy toé so gesê het,” antwoord Peter, met verskoonbare bitsigheid.

“Ag, moet jou nie aan haar steur nie,” sê Edmund. “Sy's altyd 'n ou pretbederwer. Jy het mos daardie sak- kompas van jou, Peter, of hoe? Wel, dan is alles so reg soos 'n roer. Ons moet net aanhou noordwes gaan - oor daardie klein riviertjie, die watsenaam - die Palmiet — ”

“Ek weet,” sê Peter. “Die een wat by die groot rivier by die Drif van Beruna aansluit, of Beruna se Brug soos die LKV dit noem.”

“Dis reg. Ons steek dit oor en gaan op teen die heuwel en dan is ons teen agt- of nege-uur by die Steentafel (ek bedoel, Aslan se Hoop). Ek hoop koning Kaspian hou vir ons 'n gesonde ontbyt reg!”

“Ek hoop jy's reg,” sê Susan. “Ek kan niks daarvan onthou nie.”

“Dis wat so erg van meisies is,” sê Edmund vir Peter en die dwerg. “Hulle dra nooit 'n kaart in hul koppe saam nie.”

“Dis omdat daar *iets* in ons koppe is,” sê Lucy.

Aanvanklik lyk dit asof alles goed gaan. Hulle dink selfs hulle het op 'n ou voetpaadjie afgekom, maar as jy enigiets van woude weet, sal jy weet 'n mens kom altyd op denkbeeldige paadjies af. Hulle verdwyn gewoonlik weer na ongeveer vyf minute en dan kom jy op 'n ander een af (en jy hoop dis nie regtig 'n ander een nie, maar nog deel van die vorige een) en dit raak ook weg en sodra jy heeltemal van koers af is, besef jy nie een van hulle was regtig paadjies nie. Die seuns en die dwerg is egter gewoon aan woude en word

gewoonlik nie vir langer as 'n paar sekondes gefop nie.

Hulle ploeter vir ongeveer 'n halfuur voort (drie van hulle baie styf van die vorige dag se geroei), en toe fluis- ter Trumpels skielik, “Stop.” Almal gaan staan. “Daar’s iemand agter ons,” sê hy in 'n gedempte stem. “Of liever, iets hou by ons, daar oorkant, links van ons.” Hulle staan almal stil en luister en kyk tot hul ore en oë seer is. “Ek en jy moet liever elkeen 'n pyl gereed kry,” sê Susan vir Trumpels. Die dwerg knik en toe albei boë gereed vir aksie is, gaan hulle verder.

Hulle loop 'n goeie ent deur redelike oop boswêreld terwyl hulle deeglik om hulle rondkyk. Toe beland hulle by 'n plek waar die kreupelhout digter word sodat hulle nader aan die plek waarvandaan die geluid kom, moet verbygaan. Net toe hulle by die plek kom, spring iets soos 'n bliksemstraal met 'n geknor en geflits uit die brekende takke. Lucy word omgestamp en is winduit. Dan hoor sy 'n boogenaar tweng. Toe sy weer om haar kyk, lê 'n groot, grimmige grys beer dood met Trumpels se pyl in sy sy.

“Hierdie keer het die LKV jou geklop, Su,” sê Peter met 'n effens gedwonge glimlag. Hierdie avontuur het selfs vir hom ontstel.

“Ek - ek het te lank gewag,” sê Susan verleë. “Ek was so bang dis dalk een van ons soort bere — 'n *pratende* beer.” Sy haat dit om goed dood te maak.

“Dis die probleem,” sê Trumpels, “wanneer die meeste diere vyandig en stom geword het, maar daar nog steeds van die ander soort oor is. Jy weet nooit nie, maar jy kan nie wag om uit te vind nie.”

“Arme ou Bruintjie,” sê Susan. “Dink jy *hy* was van die ander soort?”

“Nie hy nie,” sê die dwerg. “Ek het sy gesig gesien en die gegrom gehoor. Hy wou 'n dogtertjie vir ontbyt hê. En van ontbyt gepraat, ek wou jul Majesteite nie ont- moedig toe julle sê julle hoop koning Kaspian gaan vir julle 'n stewige een reghou nie, maar vleis is skaars in die kamp. En daar is baie om te eet aan 'n beer. Dit sal 'n sonde wees om die karkas hier te los sonder om iets saam te neem, en dit sal ons nie meer as 'n halfuur ophou nie. Ek neem aan julle twee seuns — ek moet seker konings sê - weet hoe om 'n beer af te slag?”

“Kom ons gaan sit ver hiervandaan,” sê Susan vir Lucy. “Ek weet wat 'n aaklige morsige besigheid *dit* gaan wees.”

Lucy sidder en knik. Toe hulle sit, sê sy, “'n Vreeslike aaklige gedagte het nou net by my opgekom, Su.”

“Wat?”

“Sal dit nie afgryslik wees as mense in ons eie wêreld, by die huis, eendag soos die diere hier wild van binne begin raak, maar nog soos mense lyk sodat

jy nooit weet wie is wie nie?”

“Ons het op die oomblik genoeg om ons oor te bekom- mer hier in Narnia,” sê die praktiese Susan, “sonder om ons sulke goed te verbeel.”

Toe hulle weer by die seuns en die dwerg aansluit, is soveel as wat hulle dink hulle kan dra van die beer afge- sny. Rou vleis is nie iets aangenaams om in ’n mens se sakke te steek nie, maar hulle vou dit in vars blare toe en maak die beste daarvan. Hulle het al genoeg ervaring om te weet hulle sal baie anders oor hierdie pap en onple- sierige pakkies voel wanneer hulle ver genoeg geloop en regtig honger is.

Weer stap hulle verder (en stop net om drie paar hande, wat dit baie nodig het, by die eerste beste stroom te was), tot die son opkom en die voëls begin sing en meer vlieë as wat hulle begeer in die varings gons. Die styfheid van die vorige dag se geroei is besig om die wyk te neem. Almal begin beter voel. Die son word warmer en hulle haal hul helms af en dra dit.

“Ek skat ons is nog op koers?” sê Edmund omtrent ’n halfuur later.

“Solank ons nie te ver na links hou nie, kan ek nie sien hoe ons verkeerd kan gaan nie,” sê Peter. “As ons te ver na regs gaan, is die ergste wat kan gebeur dat ons te gou by die Grootrivier kom en nie die hoek kan uitsny nie.”

Weer stap hulle verder sonder om ’n geluid te maak, behalwe die geplof van voete en die gerinkel van malie- koldertunieke.

“Wat het van die verbrande Palmiet geword?” vra Edmund heelwat later.

“Ek het nogal gedink ons sal teen hierdie tyd al daar wees,” sê Peter. “Maar daar’s niks wat ons kan doen behalwe aanhou nie.” Albei van hulle sien die dwerg kyk angstig na hulle, maar hy sê niks.

Hulle hou aan stap tot hul maliekoldertunieke baie warm en swaar begin voel.

“Wat op aarde?” sê Peter skielik.

Hulle het, sonder dat hulle dit agtergekom het, op die rand van ’n afgrond beland van waar hulle afkyk op ’n kloof met ’n rivier onderin. Aan die verste kant rys die kranse baie hoër. Niemand in die geselskap behalwe Edmund (en dalk Trumpels) is rotsklimmers nie.

“Ek is jammer,” sê Peter. “Dis my skuld dat ons hier- langs gekom het. Ons het verdwaal. Ek het hierdie plek nog nooit tevore gesien nie.”

Die dwerg fluit laag deur sy tande.

“O, kom ons gaan terug en vat die ander pad,” sê Susan. “Ek het mos gesê ons gaan in hierdie woud verdwaal.”

“Susan!” sê Lucy verwytend, “moenie so aan Peter kar- ring nie. Dis so gemeen; hy doen sy bes.”

“En moenie jy vir Susan so afjak nie,” sê Edmund. “Ek dink sy’s

heeltemal reg.”

“Skille en skilpaddoppe!” roep Trumpels uit. “As ons met die komslag verdwaal het, watter kans het ons om die pad terug te kry? En as ons moet teruggaan eiland toe en van voor af begin - asof ons sou kon - kan ons net sowel opgee. Teen daardie tyd het Miraz lankal met Kasbian klaargespeel.”

“Dink jy ons moet aangaan?” vra Lucy.

“Ek is nie seker die hoofkoning *het* verdwaal nie,” sê Trumpels. “Wie sê hierdie rivier is nie die Palmiet nie?” “Omdat die Palmiet nie onderin ’n kloof is nie,” sê Peter, wat sy humeur met moeite betuel.

“U Majesteit sê *is*,” antwoord die dwerg, “maar moet jy nie eerder *was* sê nie? Julie het hierdie land honderde - dalk duisende - jare gelede geken. Kon dit nie veran- der het nie? Dalk het ’n grondstorting die helfte van daardie heuwel verskuif en net kaal rots gelos, en daar is jou skeure nou aan die ander kant van die kloof. Miskien het die Palmiet sy bedding jaar na jaar dieper gemaak tot hierdie skeure aan hierdie kant ontstaan het. Of dalk was daar ’n aardbewing of iets.”

“Ek het nooit so daaroor gedink nie,” sê Peter.

“En in elk geval,” sê Trumpels, “selfs al is dit nie die Palmiet nie, vloei dit nog steeds min of meer noord en moet dit tog by die Grootrivier uitkom. Ek dink ek is op pad ondertoe by so iets verby. As ons nou stroomaf gaan, na regs, sal ons die Grootrivier kry. Dalk nie so hoog op as wat ons gehoop het nie, maar dit sal ten minste nog steeds beter as *my* roete wees.”

“Trumpels, jy’s ’n doring,” sê Peter. “Komaan. Af met die kloof.”

“Kyk! Kyk! Kyk!” roep Lucy skielik uit.

“Waar? Wat?” sê almal.

“Die leeu,” sê Lucy. “Aslan self Het julle hom nie ge- sien nie?” Haar gesig het heeltemal verander en haar oë skitter.

“Bedoel jy regtig — ?” begin Peter.

“Waar dink jy het jy hom gesien?” vra Susan.

“Moenie soos ’n grootmens met my praat nie,” sê Lucy en stamp haar voet. “Ek *dink* nie ek het hom gesien nie. Ek *het* hom gesien.”

“Waar, Lu?” vra Peter.

“Daar heel bo tussen daardie esbome. Nee, aan hierdie kant van die kloof. En op, nie af nie. Presies aan die ander kant as waarnatoe julle wil gaan. En hy wil he ons moet soontoe gaan - daar op.”

“Hoe weet jy dis wat hy wil hê?” vra Edmund.

“Hy - ek - ek weet net,” sê Lucy, “aan sy gesig.”

Die ander kyk almal in ’n verwarde stilte na mekaar.

“U Majesteit kon ’n leeu gesien het,” sê Trumpels. “Daar is leeus in

hierdie woude, of so het ek gehoor. Maar die kanse dat dit 'n vriendelike, pratende leeu is, is net so klein soos die kans dat daardie beer 'n vriendelike, pratende beer was."

"Ag, moenie simpel wees nie," sê Lucy. "Dink julle ek sal nie vir Aslan ken as ek hom sien nie?"

"Teen hierdie tyd sal hy 'n baie ou leeu wees," sê Trumpels, "as dit die een is wat julle geken het toe julle vantevore hier was! En as dit dieselfde een is, wat ver- hoed hom om ook wild en stom te geraak het soos al die ander?"

Lucy word bloedrooi en ek dink sy sou vir Trumpels bevlieg het as Peter nie sy hand op haar arm gesit het nie. "Die LKV verstaan nie. Hoe kan hy? Jy moet net aanvaar, Trumpels, dat ons regtig vir Aslan ken, ek be- doel, 'n klein deeltjie van hom. En jy moenie weer so van hom praat nie. In die eerste plek sal dit vir jou ongeluk bring en in die tweede plek is dit loutere bog. Die enigste vraag is of Aslan regtig daar was."

"Maar ek weet hy was," sê Lucy en haar oë skiet vol tranes.

"Ja, Lu, maar ons weet nie," sê Peter.

"Ons sal moet stem," sê Edmund.

"Goed," antwoord Peter. "Jy is die oudste, LKV. Waar- voor stem jy? Op of af?"

"Af," sê die dwerg. "Ek weet niks van Aslan af nie. Maar ek weet as ons links draai en die kloof stroomop volg, kan ons die hele dag stap voor ons 'n oorsteekplek kry. Maar as ons regs draai en stroomaf gaan, gaan ons binne 'n paar uur by die Grootrivier wees. En as daar *wel* enige ware leeus in die omgewing is, wil ons van hulle af wegkom en nie *na* hulle toe gaan nie."

"Wat sê jy, Susan?"

"Moenie kwaad wees nie, Lu," sê Susan, "maar ek dink ons moet ondertoe gaan. Ek is doodmoeg. Hoe gouer ons uit hierdie vervloekte bos in die oopte kan kom, hoe beter. En niemand behalwe jy het *enigiets* gesien nie."

"Edmund?" vra Peter.

"Wel, ek dink so daaroor," sê Edmund en hy praat vinnig en raak effens rooi. "Toe ons Narnia die eerste keer ontdek het, 'n jaar gelede - of 'n duisend jaar gelede, of wat ook al — was dit Lucy wat dit eerste gesien het en nie een van ons wou haar glo nie. Ek was die ergste van almal, ek weet. En tog was sy reg. Sal dit nie billik wees om haar hierdie keer te glo nie? Ek stem dat ons moet opgaan."

"O, Ed!" sê Lucy en gryp sy hand.

"En nou is dit jou beurt, Peter," sê Susan, "en ek hoop regtig - "

"Ag bly tog net stil, bly stil dat ek kan dink," val Peter haar in die rede. "Ek sal baie liever nie wil stem nie."

“Jy is die hoofkoning,” sê Trumpels streng.

“*Af*,” sê Peter na ’n lang stilte. “Ek weet Lucy kan reg wees, maar ek kan nie anders nie. Ons moet óf die een, óf die ander doen

Dus gaan hulle na regs langs die kant met die stroom af. En Lucy wat bitterlik huil, loop heel agter.

CHAPTER TEN

THE RETURN OF THE LION

TO KEEP ALONG THE EDGE OF THE gorge was not so easy as it had looked. Before they had gone many yards they were confronted with young fir woods growing on the very edge, and after they had tried to go through these, stooping and pushing for about ten minutes, they realized that, in there, it would take them an hour to do half a mile. So they came back and out again and decided to go round the fir wood. This took them much farther to their right than they wanted to go, far out of sight of the cliffs and out of sound of the river, till they began to be afraid they had lost it altogether. Nobody knew the time, but it was getting to the hottest part of the day.

When they were able at last to go back to the edge of the gorge (nearly a mile below the point from which they had started) they found the cliffs on their side of it a good deal lower and more broken. Soon they found a way down into the gorge and continued the journey at the river's edge. But first they had a rest and a long drink. No one was talking any more about breakfast, or even dinner, with Caspian.

They may have been wise to stick to the Rush instead of going along the top. It kept them sure of their direction: and ever since the fir wood they had all been afraid of being forced too far out of their course and losing themselves in the wood. It was an old and pathless forest, and you could not keep anything like a straight course in it. Patches of hopeless brambles, fallen trees, boggy places and dense undergrowth would be always getting in your way. But the gorge of the Rush was not at all a nice place for traveling either. I mean, it was not a nice place for people in a hurry. For an afternoon's ramble ending in a picnic tea it would have been delightful. It had everything you could want on an occasion of that sort—rumbling waterfalls, silver cascades, deep, amber-colored pools, mossy rocks, and deep moss on the banks in which you could sink over your ankles, every kind of fern, jewel-like dragon flies, sometimes a hawk overhead and once (Peter and Trumpkin both thought) an eagle. But of course what the children and the Dwarf wanted to see as soon as possible was the Great River below them, and Beruna, and the way to Aslan's How.

As they went on, the Rush began to fall more and more steeply. Their journey became more and more of a climb and less and less of a walk—in places even a dangerous climb over slippery rock with a nasty drop into dark chasms, and the river roaring angrily at the bottom.



You may be sure they watched the cliffs on their left eagerly for any sign of a break or any place where they could climb them; but those cliffs remained cruel. It was maddening, because everyone knew that if once they were out of the gorge on that side, they would have only a smooth slope and a fairly short walk to Caspian's headquarters.

The boys and the Dwarf were now in favor of lighting a fire and cooking their bear-meat. Susan didn't want this; she only wanted, as she said, "to get *on* and finish it and get out of these beastly woods." Lucy was far too tired and miserable to have any opinion about anything. But as there was no dry wood to be had, it mattered very little what anyone thought. The boys began to wonder if raw meat was really as nasty as they had always been told. Trumpkin assured them it was.



Of course, if the children had attempted a journey like this a few days ago in England, they would have been worn out. I think I have explained before how Narnia was altering them. Even Lucy was by now, so to speak, only one-third of a little girl going to boarding school for the first time, and two-thirds of Queen Lucy of Narnia.

"At last!" said Susan.

"Oh, hurray!" said Peter.

The river gorge had just made a bend and the whole view spread out beneath them. They could see open country stretching before them to the horizon and, between it and them, the broad silver ribbon of the Great River. They could see the specially broad and shallow place which had once been the Fords of Beruna but was now spanned by a long, many-arched bridge. There was a little town at the far end of it.

"By Jove," said Edmund. "We fought the Battle of Beruna just where that town is!"

This cheered the boys more than anything. You can't help feeling stronger when you look at a place where you won a glorious victory not to mention a kingdom, hundreds of years ago. Peter and Edmund were soon so busy talking about the battle that they forgot their sore feet and the heavy drag of their mail shirts on their shoulders. The Dwarf

was interested too.

They were all getting on at a quicker pace now. The going became easier. Though there were still sheer cliffs on their left, the ground was becoming lower on their right. Soon it was no longer a gorge at all, only a valley. There were no more waterfalls and presently they were in fairly thick woods again.

Then—all at once—*whizz*, and a sound rather like the stroke of a woodpecker. The children were still wondering where (ages ago) they had heard a sound just like that and why they disliked it so, when Trumpkin shouted, “Down,” at the same moment forcing Lucy (who happened to be next to him) flat down into the bracken. Peter, who had been looking up to see if he could spot a squirrel, had seen what it was—a long cruel arrow had sunk into a tree trunk just above his head. As he pulled Susan down and dropped himself, another came rasping over his shoulder and struck the ground at his side.

“Quick! Quick! Get back! *Crawl!*” panted Trumpkin.

They turned and wriggled along uphill, under the bracken amid clouds of horribly buzzing flies. Arrows whizzed round them. One struck Susan’s helmet with a sharp ping and glanced off. They crawled quicker. Sweat poured off them. Then they ran, stooping nearly double. The boys held their swords in their hands for fear they would trip them up.

It was heart-breaking work—all uphill again, back over the ground they had already traveled. When they felt that they really couldn’t run any more, even to save their lives, they all dropped down in the damp moss beside a waterfall and behind a big boulder, panting. They were surprised to see how high they had already got.



They listened intently and heard no sound of pursuit.

“So *that’s* all right,” said Trumpkin, drawing a deep breath. “They’re not searching the wood. Only sentries, I expect. But it means that Miraz has an outpost down there. Bottles and battledores! though, it was a near thing.”

“I ought to have my head smacked for bringing us this way at all,” said Peter.

“On the contrary, your Majesty,” said the Dwarf. “For one thing it wasn’t you, it was your royal brother, King Edmund, who first suggested going by Glasswater.”

"I'm afraid the D.L.F.'s right," said Edmund, who had quite honestly forgotten this ever since things began going wrong.

"And for another," continued Trumpkin, "if we'd gone my way, we'd have walked straight into that new outpost, most likely; or at least had just the same trouble avoiding it. I think this Glasswater route has turned out for the best."

"A blessing in disguise," said Susan.

"Some disguise!" said Edmund.

"I suppose we'll have to go right up the gorge again now," said Lucy.

"Lu, you're a hero," said Peter. "That's the nearest you've got today to saying *I told you so*. Let's get on."

"And as soon as we're well up into the forest," said Trumpkin, "whatever anyone says, I'm going to light a fire and cook supper. But we must get well away from here."

There is no need to describe how they toiled back up the gorge. It was pretty hard work, but oddly enough everyone felt more cheerful. They were getting their second wind; and the word *supper* had had a wonderful effect.

They reached the fir wood which had caused them so much trouble while it was still daylight, and bivouacked in a hollow just above it. It was tedious gathering the firewood; but it was grand when the fire blazed up and they began producing the damp and smeary parcels of bear-meat which would have been so very unattractive to anyone who had spent the day indoors. The Dwarf had splendid ideas about cookery. Each apple (they still had a few of these) was wrapped up in bear's meat—as if it was to be apple dumpling with meat instead of pastry, only much thicker—and spiked on a sharp stick and then roasted. And the juice of the apple worked all through the meat, like apple sauce with roast pork. Bear that has lived too much on other animals is not very nice, but bear that has had plenty of honey and fruit is excellent, and this turned out to be that sort of bear. It was a truly glorious meal. And, of course, no washing up—only lying back and watching the smoke from Trumpkin's pipe and stretching one's tired legs and chatting. Everyone felt quite hopeful now about finding King Caspian tomorrow and defeating Miraz in a few days. It may not have been sensible of them to feel like this, but they did.

They dropped off to sleep one by one, but all pretty quickly.

Lucy woke out of the deepest sleep you can imagine, with the feeling that the voice she liked best in the world had been calling her name. She thought at first it was her father's voice, but that did not seem quite right. Then she thought it was Peter's voice, but that did not seem to fit either. She did not want to get up; not because she was still tired—on the contrary she was wonderfully rested and all the aches had gone from her bones—but because she felt so extremely

happy and comfortable. She was looking straight up at the Narnian moon, which is larger than ours, and at the starry sky, for the place where they had bivouacked was comparatively open.

"Lucy," came the call again, neither her father's voice nor Peter's. She sat up, trembling with excitement but not with fear. The moon was so bright that the whole forest landscape around her was almost as clear as day, though it looked wilder. Behind her was the fir wood; away to her right the jagged cliff-tops on the far side of the gorge; straight ahead, open grass to where a glade of trees began about a bow-shot away. Lucy looked very hard at the trees of that glade.

"Why, I do believe they're moving," she said to herself. "They're walking about."

She got up, her heart beating wildly, and walked toward them. There was certainly a noise in the glade, a noise such as trees make in a high wind, though there was no wind tonight. Yet it was not exactly an ordinary tree-noise either. Lucy felt there was a tune in it, but she could not catch the tune any more than she had been able to catch the words when the trees had so nearly talked to her the night before. But there was, at least, a lilt; she felt her own feet wanting to dance as she got nearer. And now there was no doubt that the trees were really moving—moving in and out through one another as if in a complicated country dance. ("And I suppose," thought Lucy, "when trees dance, it must be a very, very country dance indeed.") She was almost among them now.

The first tree she looked at seemed at first glance to be not a tree at all but a huge man with a shaggy beard and great bushes of hair. She was not frightened: she had seen such things before. But when she looked again he was only a tree, though he was still moving. You couldn't see whether he had feet or roots, of course, because when trees move they don't walk on the surface of the earth; they wade in it as we do in water. The same thing happened with every tree she looked at. At one moment they seemed to be the friendly, lovely giant and giantess forms which the tree-people put on when some good magic has called them into full life: next moment they all looked like trees again. But when they looked like trees, it was like strangely human trees, and when they looked like people, it was like strangely branchy and leafy people—and all the time that queer lilting, rustling, cool, merry noise.

"They are almost awake, not quite," said Lucy. She knew she herself was wide awake, wider than anyone usually is.

She went fearlessly in among them, dancing herself as she leaped this way and that to avoid being run into by these huge partners. But she was only half interested in them. She wanted to get beyond them to something else; it was from beyond them that the dear voice had

called.

She soon got through them (half wondering whether she had been using her arms to push branches aside, or to take hands in a Great Chain with big dancers who stooped to reach her) for they were really a ring of trees round a central open place. She stepped out from among their shifting confusion of lovely lights and shadows.

A circle of grass, smooth as a lawn, met her eyes, with dark trees dancing all round it. And then—oh joy! For *he* was there: the huge Lion, shining white in the moonlight, with his huge black shadow underneath him.



But for the movement of his tail he might have been a stone lion, but Lucy never thought of that. She never stopped to think whether he was a friendly lion or not. She rushed to him. She felt her heart would burst if she lost a moment. And the next thing she knew was that she was kissing him and putting her arms as far round his neck as she could and burying her face in the beautiful rich silkiness of his mane.

“Aslan, Aslan. Dear Aslan,” sobbed Lucy. “At last.”

The great beast rolled over on his side so that Lucy fell, half sitting and half lying between his front paws. He bent forward and just touched her nose with his tongue. His warm breath came all round her. She gazed up into the large wise face.

“Welcome, child,” he said.

“Aslan,” said Lucy, “you’re bigger.”

“That is because you are older, little one,” answered he.

“Not because you are?”

“I am not. But every year you grow, you will find me bigger.”

For a time she was so happy that she did not want to speak. But Aslan spoke.

"Lucy," he said, "we must not lie here for long. You have work in hand, and much time has been lost today."

"Yes, wasn't it a shame?" said Lucy. "I saw you all right. They wouldn't believe me. They're all so—"

From somewhere deep inside Aslan's body there came the faintest suggestion of a growl.

"I'm sorry," said Lucy, who understood some of his moods. "I didn't mean to start slanging the others. But it wasn't my fault anyway, was it?"

The Lion looked straight into her eyes.

"Oh, Aslan," said Lucy. "You don't mean it was? How could I—I couldn't have left the others and come up to you alone, how could I? Don't look at me like that ... oh well, I suppose I *could*. Yes, and it wouldn't have been alone, I know, not if I was with you. But what would have been the good?"

Aslan said nothing.

"You mean," said Lucy rather faintly, "that it would have turned out all right—somehow? But how? Please, Aslan! Am I not to know?"

"To know what *would* have happened, child?" said Aslan. "No. Nobody is ever told that."

"Oh dear," said Lucy.

"But anyone can find out what *will* happen," said Aslan. "If you go back to the others now, and wake them up; and tell them you have seen me again; and that you must all get up at once and follow me—what will happen? There is only one way of finding out."

"Do you mean that is what you want me to do?" gasped Lucy.

"Yes, little one," said Aslan.

"Will the others see you too?" asked Lucy.

"Certainly not at first," said Aslan. "Later on, it depends."

"But they won't believe me!" said Lucy.

"It doesn't matter," said Aslan.

"Oh dear, oh dear," said Lucy. "And I was so pleased at finding you again. And I thought you'd let me stay. And I thought you'd come roaring in and frighten all the enemies away—like last time. And now everything is going to be horrid."

"It is hard for you, little one," said Aslan. "But things never happen the same way twice. It has been hard for us all in Narnia before now."

Lucy buried her head in his mane to hide from his face. But there must have been magic in his mane. She could feel lion-strength going into her. Quite suddenly she sat up.

"I'm sorry, Aslan," she said. "I'm ready now."

"Now you are a lioness," said Aslan. "And now all Narnia will be renewed. But come. We have no time to lose."

He got up and walked with stately, noiseless paces back to the belt

of dancing trees through which she had just come: and Lucy went with him, laying a rather tremulous hand on his mane. The trees parted to let them through and for one second assumed their human forms completely. Lucy had a glimpse of tall and lovely wood-gods and wood-goddesses all bowing to the Lion; next moment they were trees again, but still bowing, with such graceful sweeps of branch and trunk that their bowing was itself a kind of dance.

"Now, child," said Aslan, when they had left the trees behind them, "I will wait here. Go and wake the others and tell them to follow. If they will not, then you at least must follow me alone."

It is a terrible thing to have to wake four people, all older than yourself and all very tired, for the purpose of telling them something they probably won't believe and making them do something they certainly won't like. "I mustn't think about it, I must just do it," thought Lucy.

She went to Peter first and shook him. "Peter," she whispered in his ear, "wake up. Quick. Aslan is here. He says we've got to follow him at once."

"Certainly, Lu. Whatever you like," said Peter unexpectedly. This was encouraging, but as Peter instantly rolled round and went to sleep again it wasn't much use.

Then she tried Susan. Susan did really wake up, but only to say in her most annoying grownup voice, "You've been dreaming, Lucy. Go to sleep again."

She tackled Edmund next. It was very difficult to wake him, but when at last she had done it he was really awake and sat up.

"Eh?" he said in a grumpy voice. "What are you talking about?"

She said it all over again. This was one of the worst parts of her job, for each time she said it, it sounded less convincing.

"Aslan!" said Edmund, jumping up. "Hurray! Where?"

Lucy turned back to where she could see the Lion waiting, his patient eyes fixed upon her. "There," she said, pointing.

"Where?" asked Edmund again.

"There. There. Don't you see? Just this side of the trees."

Edmund stared hard for a while and then said, "No. There's nothing there. You've got dazzled and muddled with the moonlight. One does, you know. I thought I saw something for a moment myself. It's only an optical what-do-you-call-it."

"I can see him all the time," said Lucy. "He's looking straight at us."

"Then why can't I see him?"

"He said you mightn't be able to."

"Why?"

"I don't know. That's what he said."

"Oh, bother it all," said Edmund. "I do wish you wouldn't keep on

seeing things. But I suppose we'll have to wake the others."

Hoofstuk 10

Die leeu keer terug



Om op die rand van 'n afgrond te loop, is nie so mak-lik as wat dit mag lyk nie. Voor hulle baie ver gevorder het, word hul pad versper deur ruig jong dennebome op die rand van die ravyn en nadat hulle meer as tien minute gesukkel het om daardeur te kom, besef hulle dit sal hulle dáár meer as 'n uur neem om 'n half-myl te vorder. Hulle gaan dus terug en besluit om óm die dennebos te stap. Dit neem hulle baie verder na regs as wat hulle wou gaan, ver van die kranse en die geluid van die rivier af, tot hulle begin dink hulle het verdwaal. Niemand weet presies hoe laat dit is nie, maar die son sit hoog.

Toe hulle uiteindelik weer op die kant van die ravyn kan stap (amper 'n myl onder hul beginpunt), is die kranse aan hulle kant baie laer en meer onderbroke. Kort hierna vind hulle 'n pad tot onder in die kloof en toe kan hulle verder langs die rivier stap. Maar eers moet hulle rus en iets drink. Niemand praat meer oor ontbyt of selfs aandete saam met Kaspian nie.

Dit was seker verstandig om langs die Palmiet te loop, pleks van aan die bokant. Dit hou hulle op koers en ná die dennebos is niemand lus om te ver van koers af te gaan nie, uit vrees dat hulle sal verdwaal. Dit is 'n ou woud sonder paadjies en dis onmoontlik om reg-uit daardeur te stap. Daar is lappe braambosse, bome wat omgeval het, moerasagtige plekke en digte kreupelhout in die pad. Maar dis ook nie lekker om in die Palmiet se kloof te stap nie. Ek bedoel, dis nie 'n lekker plek vir mense wat haastig is nie. Vir 'n mid-daguitstappie en 'n piekniek sal dit heerlik wees. Dit het alles wat jy wil hê by so 'n geleentheid - bruisende watervalle, silwer strome, diep amberkleurige poele, mos-bedekte rotse en diep mos op die walle waarin jy tot oor jou enkels kan insak, elke denkbare soort varing, juweelagtige naaldekokers, soms 'n valk daar bo en een keer (Peter en Trumpels het albei so gedink) 'n arend. Maar al wat die kinders en die dwerg wil hê, is om die Groot-rivier so gou moontlik voor hulle te sien, en Beruna en die pad na Aslan se Hoop.

Hoe verder hulle gaan, hoe vinniger en steiler daal die Palmiet. Hul reis word al hoe meer van 'n geklim en minder van 'n gestap — plek-plek selfs 'n gevaarlike klimmery oor glibberige rotse met 'n lelike val na donker afgronde en 'n bruisende rivier aan die onderkant.

Jy kan seker wees hulle hou die kranse aan hul lin- kerkant gretig dop vir enige teken van 'n skeur of 'n plek waardeur hulle na bo kan klim, maar die kranse hly on- genaakbaar. Dit is genoeg om hulle rasend te maak, want almal weet sodra hulle aan daardie kant van die kloof is, bly daar net 'n geleidelike helling en 'n redelike kort stappie na Kaspian se hoofkwartier oor.

Die seuns en die dwerg wil nou vuurmaak en van die beervleis braai. Susan wil nie; sy wil net, soos sy sê, “aan- gaan en *klaarmaak* en uit hierdie pestelike woude kom”. Lucy is te moeg en te mistroostig om oor enigiets 'n opinie te hê. Maar aangesien daar geen droë hout byder- hand is nie, maak dit bitter min saak wat enigiemand dink. Die seuns begin wonder of rou vleis regtig so aak- lig is soos almal altyd sê. Trumpels verseker hulle dit is.

Indien die vierstuks so 'n tog 'n paar dae gelede in hulle land aangepak het, sou hulle nou al pootuit gewees het. Ek dink ek het tevore verduidelik hoe Narnia hulle affekteer. Selfs Lucy is teen hierdie tyd nog net een derde van die klein meisietjie wat vir die eerste keer kosskool toe gaan en twee derdes koningin Lucy van Narnia.

“Uiteindelik!” sê Susan.

“O, hoera!” sê Peter.

Die rivier het 'n draai gemaak en die hele vergesig lê voor hulle uitgestrek. Hulle sien 'n oop landskap tot aan die horison voor hulle lê en tussen dit en hulle, die breë silwer lint van die Grootrivier. Hulle kan die besonder breë, vlak plek sien wat voorheen die driewe van Beruna was, maar wat nou deur 'n lang brug met talle suileboë oorspan word. Aan die verste kant is 'n klein dorpie.

“Liewe land,” sê Edmund. “Die Slag van Beruna was net mooi waar daardie dorpie nou is!”

Dit beur die seuns meer as enigiets anders op. 'n Mens kan nie anders as om sterker te voel wanneer jy na 'n plek kyk waar jy honderde jare gelede 'n glorieryke oor- winning behaal en boonop 'n koninkryk ingepalm het nie. Peter en Edmund is spoedig so besig om oor die oorlog te praat dat hulle skoon vergeet hoe seer hul voete is en hoe swaar die maliekoldertunieke aan hul skouers hang. Die dwerg is die ene ore.

Hulle vorder nou teen 'n vinniger pas. Die roete is aansienlik makliker. Hoewel daar nog steeds steil af- gronde aan hul linkerkant is, word die grond na regs vin- nig laer. Spoedig is daar nie meer sprake van 'n *ravyn* nie, net 'n vallei. Daar is nie meer watervalle nie en bin- nekort is hulle weer in redelik digte woude.

Toe, skielik — *whizzz* - gevolg deur 'n geluid wat baie soos die kap van 'n houtkappervoël klink. Die vierstuks wonder nog waar hulle jare gelede 'n

soortgelyke geluid gehoor het en hoekom hulle niks daarvan hou nie, toe Trumpels “Val plat!” skree, op dieselfde oomblik dat hy vir Lucy wat toevallig langs hom is in die varings plat- druk. Peter, wat rondgekyk het om te sien of daar eek- horings is, sien wat dit is: ’n lang, wrede pyl net bo sy kop in die boomstam. Toe hy vir Susan plattrek en langs haar neersak, seil nog een oor sy kop en tref die grond langs hom. “Gou! Gou! Val terug! *Kruip!*” hyg Trumpels.

Hulle swaai om en kruip teen die heuwel op, onder- deur die varings en tussen swerms vlieë deur wat aaklig gons. Pyle suis om hulle. Een tref Susan se helm met ’n skerp pieng en spat weg. Hulle kruip vinniger. Die sweet tap hulle af. Toe begin hulle amper dubbel gevou hard- loop. Die seuns hou hul swaarde in hul hande uit vrees dat dit hulle sal laat struikel.

Dit is om van te huil - die hele ent weer heuwelop, terug oor die terrein waarlangs hulle gekom het. Toe hulle voel hulle kan nie verder hardloop nie, nie eens om hul lewens te red nie, val almal hygend neer op die klam mos langs ’n waterval agter ’n groot rots. Hulle is ver- baas om te sien hoe hoog hulle reeds is.

Hulle luister gespanne, maar dit klink nie of hulle agtervolg word nie.

“Wel, *dis* gaaf,” sê Trumpels en trek sy asem diep in. “Hulle deursoek nie die woud nie. Net brandwagte, sou ek sê. Maar dit beteken Miraz het ’n buitepos hier iewers. Wors en wasklappers, dit was so hittete.”

“Ek kan myself skop dat ek ons hierlangs gebring het,” sê Peter.

“Inteendeel, u Majesteit,” sê die dwerg. “Eerstens was dit jou koninklike broer, koning Edmund, wat die Glas- water voorgestel het.”

“Ek is bevrees die LKV is reg,” sê Edmund wat sedert dinge begin skeef loop het, skoon hiervan vergeet het.

“En tweedens,” gaan Trumpels voort, “as ons my roe- te gevolg het, het ons ons na alle waarskynlikheid in daardie buitepos vasgeloop, of ons sou dit met net soveel moeite moes vermy. Ek dink die Glaswater-roete het die beste uitgewerk.”

“’n Bedekte seën,” sê Susan.

“Omtrent bedek!” sê Edmund.

“Nou moet ons seker weer met hierdie kloof opklim,” sê Lucy.

“Lu, jy is ’n held,” sê Peter. “Dit is die naaste wat jy nog vandag aan *ek* het mos so gesê gekom het. Kom ons gaan.”

“En sodra ons behoorlik in die woud is,” sê Trumpels, “maak ek ’n vuur en kook aandete, al sê wie ook wat. Maar ons moet eers ’n hele ent weggom.”

Dit is nie nodig om te vertel hoe hulle terug met die kloof op gesukkel het nie. Dit was harde werk, maar vreemd genoeg voel almal beter. Hulle het hul

tweede wind gekry en die woord *aandete* het 'n wonderlike uitwerking op hulle gehad.

Die geselskap bereik die dennebos wat vir hulle soveel moeite veroorsaak het terwyl dit nog lig is en kampeer in 'n holte net daarbo. Dit is vervelig om vuurmaakhout bymekaar te maak, maar dis lekker toe die vuur opvlam en hulle die klam en smerige pakke beervleis uithaal wat baie onaantreklik sou wees vir enigeen wat die dag binnehuis deurgebring het. Die dwerg het wonderlike idees oor hoe om te kook. Elke appel (hulle het nog 'n hele paar) word in beervleis toegedraai — asof dit 'n appel-kluitjie met vleis pleks van deeg is, net baie dikker - aan 'n skerp stok gestee en gerooster. En die sous van die appels trek regdeur die vleis soos appelsous met geroosterde vark. Bere wat baie vleis eet, is nie baie lekker nie, maar bere wat baie heuning en vrugte eet, smaak vorentoe en dit was so 'n beer. Dis 'n wonderlike maaltyd. En natuurlik is daar niks om op te was nie - hulle kan net agteroor lê en na Trumpels se pyp se rook kyk en hul moeë bene strek en gesels. Almal voel redelik hoopvol dat hulle koning Kaspian die volgende dag sal kry en koning Miraz 'n paar dae later sal verslaan. Dit is seker nie baie verstandig van hulle om so te voel nie, maar dis hoe dit is.

Een vir een raak hulle aan die slaap, almal redelik gou.

Lucy word wakker uit die diepste slaap wat jy jou kan indink en dit voel asof die stem waarvan sy die meeste in die hele wêreld hou, haar naam roep. Eers dink sy dis haar pa se stem, maar dit klink nie heeltemal soos hy nie. Dan dink sy dis Peter, maar dis ook nie hy nie. Sy is nie lus om op te staan nie, nie omdat sy nog moeg is nie - inteendeel, sy voel perdfris en al die pyne het uit haar bene verdwyn - maar omdat sy so ongelooflik gelukkig en tevrede voel. Sy kyk op na die Narniaanse maan wat groter as ons s'n is en na die sterrehemel, want die plek waar hulle kampeer, is redelik oop.

“Lucy!” hoor sy weer en dis nie haar pa of Peter se stem nie. Bewend van opwinding, nie van vrees nie, kom sy orent. Die maan is so helder dat die hele woudlandskap om haar amper so lig soos die dag self is, hoewel dit wilder lyk. Agter haar is die dennewoud, na regs die getande kranse en voor haar, aan die verste kant van die afgrond, is oop gras tot waar die bome, omtrent 'n pylskoot verder, weer begin. Lucy kyk deurdringend na die bome aan die ander kant van die oopte.

“Ek dink hulle beweeg,” sê sy vir haarself. “Hulle loop rond.”

Met 'n hart wat wild klop, staan sy op en stap nader. Daar is beslis 'n geluid in die oopte, die soort geluid wat bome maak as die wind hard waai, hoewel daar vannag geen wind is nie. Tog is dit ook nie 'n gewone soort boomgeluid nie. Dit voel vir Lucy asof dit 'n wysie het, maar sy kan die wysie

nog minder uitmaak as wat sy die woorde die vorige nag kon hoor toe die bome so amper met haar gepraat het. Maar daar is ten minste 'n deuntjie; haar voete wil net dans hoe nader sy kom. En nou is daar geen twyfel dat die bome inderdaad beweeg nie - in en uit en deur mekaar soos tydens 'n ingewikkelde volksdans. En ek sou sê, dink Lucy, as die bome dans, moet dit beslis 'n volksdans wees. Sy is nou amper tussen hulle.

Die eerste boom wat sy sien, lyk met die eerste oogopslag glad nie na 'n boom nie, maar na 'n reuseman met 'n woeste baard en groot bosse hare. Sy is nie bang nie: sy het sulke goed al tevore gesien. Maar toe sy weer kyk, is hy net 'n boom, hoewel hy nog steeds beweeg. Jy kon nie sien of hy voete of wortels het nie, want wanneer bome beweeg, loop hulle nie bo-op die grond soos ons nie, hulle waad daardeur soos ons in water maak. Die selfde ding gebeur met elke boom waarna sy kyk. Die een oomblik lyk hulle na die pragtige, vriendelike, reusemanlike en -vroulike gedaantes wat die boommense aanneem wanneer goeie toorkuns hulle tot 'n voile lewe roep, en die volgende oomblik lyk hulle weer soos bome. Maar wanneer hulle soos bome lyk, is dit vreemde mensagtige bome, en wanneer hulle soos mense lyk, is dit vreemde takkerige mense vol blare - en die hele tyd hoor sy daar - die eenaardige deuntjie, 'n koel, vrolike, ritselende, opge-ruimde geluid.

"Hulle is so te sê wakker," sê Lucy. Sy weet sy is heeltemal wakker, meer as wat enigiemand gewoonlik is.

Sy beweeg vreesloos tussen hulle deur in 'n soort dans waarin sy nou hierdie kant toe en dan daardie kant toe spring om te keer dat haar enorme dansmaats in haar vasloop. Maar sy stel net deels in hulle belang. Sy wil verby hulle by iets anders kom; die geliefde stem het van anderkant hulle gekom.

Sy kom gou deur hulle (hoewel sy onseker is of sy die takke met haar arms opsy gestoot het, of in 'n groot kettingdans hande gehou het met enorme dansers wat moes oorbuig om by te kom), want eintlik staan die bome in 'n kring met 'n oop gedeelte in die middel. Dan tree sy uit die bewegende warboel van lig en skaduwee en voor haar sien sy 'n sirkel gladde gras met donker bome wat rondom dans.

En toe — watter vreugde! Want *hy* is daar: die groot leeu, skitterwit in die maanlig, met sy groot swart skaduwee onder hom.

Hy kon 'n klipleeu gewees het as dit nie vir die kwispeling van sy stert was nie, maar Lucy dink nie daaraan nie. Sy huiwer nie om te wonder of dit 'n vriendelike leeu is of nie. Sy storm nader. Dit voel asof haar hart sal bars as sy 'n sekonde moet verloor. Die volgende oomblik soen sy hom en slaan haar arms so ver om sy nek as wat sy kan en bêre haar gesig in sy pragtige ryk en

syagtige maanhare.

“Aslan, Aslan. Liewe Aslan,” snik Lucy. “Uiteindelik.”

Die groot dier rol om op sy sy sodat Lucy half sittend en half lêend tussen sy pote beland. Hy buk oor en sy tong raak liggies aan haar neus. Sy warm asem is oral om haar en sy staar op in die groot, wyse gesig.

“Welkom, kind,” sê hy.

“Aslan,” sê Lucy, “jy’s groter.”

“Dis omdat jy ouer is, kleintjie,” antwoord hy.

“Nie omdat jy is nie?”

“Ek is nie. Maar met elke jaar wat jy groter word, sal ek ook vir jou groter lyk.”

Vir ’n rukkie is sy so gelukkig dat sy nie wil praat nie. Maar Aslan praat.

“Lucy,” sê hy, “ons kan nie te lank hier lê nie. Daar is werk wat jy moet doen en baie tyd het vandag verlore gegaan.”

“Ja, is dit nie jammer nie?” sê Lucy. “*Ek* het jou duidelik gesien. Hulle wou my nie glo nie. Hulle is almal so — ” Van iewers diep binne-in Aslan se liggaam kom ’n dowwe gegrom.

“Ek is jammer,” sê Lucy, wat sommige van sy buie ken. “Ek het nie bedoel om sleg van die ander te praat nie, maar dit was mos nie my skuld nie, was dit?”

Die leeu kyk haar stip in die oë.

“O Aslan,” sê Lucy. “Jy bedoel dit was? Hoe kon ek - ek kon die ander tog nie net so los en alleen na jou gaan nie? Moenie so na my kyk nie . . . O wel, ek *kon* seker. Ja, en ek sou nie alleen gewees het nie, ek weet, nie as ek saam met jou is nie. Maar wat sou dit gehelp het?” Aslan sê niks.

“Jy bedoel,” sê Lucy floutjies, “alles sou reggekóm het - op die een of ander manier? Maar hoe? Asseblief, Aslan! Mag ek dan nie weet nie?”

“Weet wat *sou* gebeur het, kind?” sê Aslan. “Nee. Nie- mand weet dit ooit nie.”

“Ai tog,” sê Lucy.

“Maar enigeen kan uitvind wat *gaan* gebeur,” sê Aslan. “As jy nou na die ander toe teruggaan en hulle wakker maak en vir hulle vertel jy het my weer gesien, en julle moet dadelik opstaan en my volg - wat sal gebeur? Daar is net een manier om te weet.”

“Jy bedoel dis wat jy wil he ek moet doen?” snak Lucy. “Ja, my kleintjie,” sê Aslan.

“Sal die ander jou ook sien?” vra Lucy.

“Beslis nie aanvanklik nie,” sê Aslan. “Later, dit hang af”

“Maar hulle sal my glo nie!” sê Lucy.

“Dit maak nie saak nie,” sê Aslan.

“Ai tog, ai tog,” sê Lucy. “Ek was so bly toe ek jou weer kry. En ek het gedink jy gaan my toelaat om hier te bly. En ek het gedink jy gaan brullend instorm en die vyand verjaag - soos laas keer. En nou gaan alles aaklig wees.”

“Dit is swaar vir jou, kleintjie,” sê Aslan. “Maar dinge gebeur nooit twee keer op dieselfde manier nie. En ons het almal al tevore ook in Narnia swaargekry.”

Lucy bêre haar kop in sy maanhare sodat sy hom nie in die gesig hoef te kyk nie. Maar daar moet towerkrag in sy maanhare wees. Sy kan voel hoe die leeu krag in haar vloei. Skielik sit sy regop. “Ek is jammer, Aslan,” sê sy. “Ek is nou gereed.”

“Nou is jy ’n leeuwyfie,” sê Aslan. “En nou sal die hele Narnia vernuwe word. Maar kom. Daar is nie tyd om te verspil nie.”

Hy staan op en stap met statige, geluidlose tree terug na die strook dansende bome waardeur sy so pas gekom het en Lucy stap saam met hom, ’n bewende hand op sy maanhare. Die bome maak oop om hulle deur te laat en vir ’n oomblik neem hulle ten voile menslike gedaantes aan. Lucy het ’n glimp van lieflike lang woudgode en — godinne wat voor die leeu buig en die volgende oomblik is hulle weer bome, maar nog steeds buigend en met sulke swiepende bewegings van tak en stam dat die buigery ook ’n soort dans is.

“Reg, kind,” sê Aslan toe hulle die bome agtergelaat het, “ek sal hier wag. Gaan maak die ander wakker en sê hulle moet jou volg. As hulle nie wil nie, dan moet jy op jou eie saam met my kom.”

Dit is ’n vreeslike ding om vier mense wat almal baie moeg en heelwat ouer as jy is wakker te maak, net om vir hulle iets te sê wat hulle na alle waarskynlikheid nie gaan glo nie, en om hulle iets te laat doen waarvoor hulle nie lus gaan wees nie. Ek moenie daaroor dink nie, ek moet dit net doen, dink Lucy.

Sy gaan eers na Peter toe en skud hom. “Peter,” fluister sy in sy oor, “word wakker. Gou! Aslan is hier. Hy sê ons moet hom dadelik volg.”

“Sekerlik, Lu. Wat jy ook al sê,” sê Peter heel onverwags. Dit is bemoedigend, maar help nie juis nie, want Peter rol onmiddellik om en slaap verder.

Toe probeer sy vir Susan. Susan word regtig wakker, maar net om met haar mees irriterende grootmensstem te sê, “Jy het gedroom, Lucy. Loop slaap.”

Hierna takel sy vir Edmund. Dit is bitter moeilik om hom wakker te maak, maar sy kry dit uiteindelik reg en hy kom orent.

“Hm?” sê hy in ’n knorrige stem. “Waarvan praat jy?” Sy herhaal alles

van voor af. Dit is een van die moeilikste dele van haar taak, want elke keer dat sy dit sê, klink dit minder oortuigend.

“Aslan!” sê Edmund en spring op. “Hoera! Waar?” Lucy draai terug na waar sy die leeu kan sien wag, sy geduldige oë op haar. “Daar,” sê sy en wys.

“Waar?” vra Edmund weer.

“Daar. Daar. Kan jy nie sien nie? Aan hierdie kant van die bome.”

Edmund kyk ’n rukkie vorsend en dan sê hy, “Nee, daar’s niks nie. Jy’s verblind, en deurmekaar van die maanlig. Dit gebeur, nê. Ek het vir ’n oomblik ook gedink ek sien iets. Dis ’n optiese watsenaam.”

“Ek kan hom die hele tyd sien,” sê Lucy. “Hy kyk reguit na ons.”

“Hoekom kan ek hom dan nie sien nie?”

“Hy het gesê jy sal dalk nie kan nie.”

“Hoekom?”

“Ek weet nie. Dis wat hy gesê het.”

“Ag, deksels,” sê Edmund. “Ek wens jy wil nie aanmekaar goed sien nie. Maar ons moet die ander seker maar wakker maak.”

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE LION ROARS

WHEN THE WHOLE PARTY WAS FINALLY awake Lucy had to tell her story for the fourth time. The blank silence which followed it was as discouraging as anything could be.

"I can't see anything," said Peter after he had stared his eyes sore. "Can you, Susan?"

"No, of course I can't," snapped Susan. "Because there isn't anything to see. She's been dreaming. Do lie down and go to sleep, Lucy."

"And I do hope," said Lucy in a tremulous voice, "that you will all come with me. Because—because I'll have to go with him whether anyone else does or not."

"Don't talk nonsense, Lucy," said Susan. "Of course you can't go off on your own. Don't let her, Peter. She's being downright naughty."

"I'll go with her, if she *must* go," said Edmund. "She's been right before."

"I know she has," said Peter. "And she may have been right this morning. We certainly had no luck going down the gorge. Still—at this hour of the night. And why should Aslan be invisible to us? He never used to be. It's not like him. What does the D.L.F. say?"

"Oh, I say nothing at all," answered the Dwarf. "If you all go, of course, I'll go with you; and if your party splits up, I'll go with the High King. That's my duty to him and King Caspian. But, if you ask my private opinion, I'm a plain dwarf who doesn't think there's much chance of finding a road by night where you couldn't find one by day. And I have no use for magic lions which are talking lions and don't talk, and friendly lions though they don't do us any good, and whopping big lions though nobody can see them. It's all bilge and beanstalks as far as I can see."

"He's beating his paw on the ground for us to hurry," said Lucy. "We must go *now*. At least I must."

"You've no right to try to force the rest of us like that. It's four to one and you're the youngest," said Susan.

"Oh, come on," growled Edmund. "We've got to go. There'll be no peace till we do." He fully intended to back Lucy up, but he was annoyed at losing his night's sleep and was making up for it by doing everything as sulkily as possible.

"On the march, then," said Peter, wearily fitting his arm into his shield-strap and putting his helmet on. At any other time he would have said something nice to Lucy, who was his favorite sister, for he knew how wretched she must be feeling, and he knew that, whatever had happened, it was not her fault. But he couldn't help being a little

annoyed with her all the same.

Susan was the worst. "Supposing I started behaving like Lucy," she said. "I might threaten to stay here whether the rest of you went on or not. I jolly well think I shall."

"Obey the High King, your Majesty," said Trumpkin, "and let's be off. If I'm not to be allowed to sleep, I'd as soon march as stand here talking."

And so at last they got on the move. Lucy went first, biting her lip and trying not to say all the things she thought of saying to Susan. But she forgot them when she fixed her eyes on Aslan. He turned and walked at a slow pace about thirty yards ahead of them. The others had only Lucy's directions to guide them, for Aslan was not only invisible to them but silent as well. His big cat-like paws made no noise on the grass.

He led them to the right of the dancing trees—whether they were still dancing nobody knew, for Lucy had her eyes on the Lion and the rest had their eyes on Lucy—and nearer the edge of the gorge. "Cobbles and kettledrums!" thought Trumpkin. "I hope this madness isn't going to end in a moonlight climb and broken necks."

For a long way Aslan went along the top of the precipices. Then they came to a place where some little trees grew right on the edge. He turned and disappeared among them. Lucy held her breath, for it looked as if he had plunged over the cliff; but she was too busy keeping him in sight to stop and think about this. She quickened her pace and was soon among the trees herself. Looking down, she could see a steep and narrow path going slantwise down into the gorge between rocks, and Aslan descending it. He turned and looked at her with his happy eyes. Lucy clapped her hands and began to scramble down after him. From behind her she heard the voices of the others shouting, "Hi! Lucy! Look out, for goodness' sake. You're right on the edge of the gorge. Come back—" and then, a moment later, Edmund's voice saying, "No, she's right. There *is* a way down."

Half-way down the path Edmund caught up with her.

"Look!" he said in great excitement. "Look! What's that shadow crawling down in front of us?"

"It's *his* shadow," said Lucy.

"I do believe you're right, Lu," said Edmund. "I can't think how I didn't see it before. But where is he?"

"With his shadow, of course. Can't you see him?"

"Well, I almost thought I did—for a moment. It's such a rum light."

"Get on, King Edmund, get on," came Trumpkin's voice from behind and above: and then, farther behind and still nearly at the top, Peter's voice saying, "Oh, buck up, Susan. Give me your hand. Why, a baby could get down here. And do stop grouching."

In a few minutes they were at the bottom and the roaring of water filled their ears. Treading delicately, like a cat, Aslan stepped from stone to stone across the stream. In the middle he stopped, bent down to drink, and as he raised his shaggy head, dripping from the water, he turned to face them again. This time Edmund saw him. "Oh, Aslan!" he cried, darting forward. But the Lion whisked round and began padding up the slope on the far side of the Rush.

"Peter, Peter," cried Edmund. "Did you see?"

"I saw something," said Peter. "But it's so tricky in this moonlight. On we go, though, and three cheers for Lucy. I don't feel half so tired now, either."

Aslan without hesitation led them to their left, farther up the gorge. The whole journey was odd and dream-like—the roaring stream, the wet gray grass, the glimmering cliffs which they were approaching, and always the glorious, silently pacing Beast ahead. Everyone except Susan and the Dwarf could see him now.

Presently they came to another steep path, up the face of the farther precipices. These were far higher than the ones they had just descended, and the journey up them was a long and tedious zigzag. Fortunately the Moon shone right above the gorge so that neither side was in shadow.

Lucy was nearly blown when the tail and hind legs of Aslan disappeared over the top: but with one last effort she scrambled after him and came out, rather shaky-legged and breathless, on the hill they had been trying to reach ever since they left Glasswater. The long gentle slope (heather and grass and a few very big rocks that shone white in the moonlight) stretched up to where it vanished in a glimmer of trees about half a mile away. She knew it. It was the hill of the Stone Table.

With a jingling of mail the others climbed up behind her. Aslan glided on before them and they walked after him.

"Lucy," said Susan in a very small voice.

"Yes?" said Lucy.

"I see him now. I'm sorry."

"That's all right."

"But I've been far worse than you know. I really believed it was him—he, I mean—yesterday. When he warned us not to go down to the fir wood. And I really believed it was him tonight, when you woke us up. I mean, deep down inside. Or I could have, if I'd let myself. But I just wanted to get out of the woods and—and—oh, I don't know. And what ever am I to say to him?"

"Perhaps you won't need to say much," suggested Lucy.

Soon they reached the trees and through them the children could see the Great Mound, Aslan's How, which had been raised over the

Table since their days.

“Our side don’t keep very good watch,” muttered Trumpkin. “We ought to have been challenged before now—”

“Hush!” said the other four, for now Aslan had stopped and turned and stood facing them, looking so majestic that they felt as glad as anyone can who feels afraid, and as afraid as anyone can who feels glad. The boys strode forward: Lucy made way for them: Susan and the Dwarf shrank back.

“Oh, Aslan,” said King Peter, dropping on one knee and raising the Lion’s heavy paw to his face, “I’m so glad. And I’m so sorry. I’ve been leading them wrong ever since we started and especially yesterday morning.”

“My dear son,” said Aslan.

Then he turned and welcomed Edmund. “Well done,” were his words.

Then, after an awful pause, the deep voice said, “Susan.” Susan made no answer but the others thought she was crying. “You have listened to fears, child,” said Aslan. “Come, let me breathe on you. Forget them. Are you brave again?”

“A little, Aslan,” said Susan.

“And now!” said Aslan in a much louder voice with just a hint of roar in it, while his tail lashed his flanks. “And now, where is this little Dwarf, this famous swordsman and archer, who doesn’t believe in lions? Come here, son of Earth, come **HERE!**”—and the last word was no longer the hint of a roar but almost the real thing.

“Wraiths and wreckage!” gasped Trumpkin in the ghost of a voice. The children, who knew Aslan well enough to see that he liked the Dwarf very much, were not disturbed; but it was quite another thing for Trumpkin, who had never seen a lion before, let alone this Lion. He did the only sensible thing he could have done; that is, instead of bolting, he tottered toward Aslan.

Aslan pounced. Have you ever seen a very young kitten being carried in the mother cat’s mouth? It was like that. The Dwarf, hunched up in a little, miserable ball, hung from Aslan’s mouth. The Lion gave him one shake and all his armor rattled like a tinker’s pack and then—heypresto—the Dwarf flew up in the air. He was as safe as if he had been in bed, though he did not feel so. As he came down the huge velvety paws caught him as gently as a mother’s arms and set him (right way up, too) on the ground.



“Son of Earth, shall we be friends?” asked Aslan.

“Ye—he—he—hes,” panted the Dwarf, for it had not yet got its breath back.

“Now,” said Aslan. “The Moon is setting. Look behind you: there is the dawn beginning. We have no time to lose. You three, you sons of Adam and son of Earth, hasten into the Mound and deal with what you will find there.”

The Dwarf was still speechless and neither of the boys dared to ask if Aslan would follow them. All three drew their swords and saluted, then turned and jingled away into the dusk. Lucy noticed that there was no sign of weariness in their faces: both the High King and King Edmund looked more like men than boys.

The girls watched them out of sight, standing close beside Aslan. The light was changing. Low down in the east, Aravir, the morning star of Narnia, gleamed like a little moon. Aslan, who seemed larger than before, lifted his head, shook his mane, and roared.

The sound, deep and throbbing at first like an organ beginning on a low note, rose and became louder, and then far louder again, till the earth and air were shaking with it. It rose up from that hill and floated across all Narnia. Down in Miraz’s camp men woke, stared palely in one another’s faces, and grasped their weapons. Down below that in the Great River, now at its coldest hour, the heads and shoulders of the nymphs, and the great weedy-bearded head of the river-god, rose from the water. Beyond it, in every field and wood, the alert ears of rabbits rose from their holes, the sleepy heads of birds came out from under wings, owls hooted, vixens barked, hedgehogs grunted, the trees stirred. In towns and villages mothers pressed babies close to their breasts, staring with wild eyes, dogs whimpered, and men leaped up groping for lights. Far away on the northern frontier the mountain giants peered from the dark gateways of their castles.



What Lucy and Susan saw was a dark something coming to them from almost every direction across the hills. It looked first like a black mist creeping on the ground, then like the stormy waves of a black sea rising higher and higher as it came on, and then, at last, like what it

was—woods on the move. All the trees of the world appeared to be rushing toward Aslan. But as they drew nearer they looked less like trees, and when the whole crowd, bowing and curtsying and waving thin long arms to Aslan, were all around Lucy, she saw that it was a crowd of human shapes. Pale birch-girls were tossing their heads, willow-women pushed back their hair from their brooding faces to gaze on Aslan, the queenly beeches stood still and adored him, shaggy oak-men, lean and melancholy elms, shock-headed hollies (dark themselves, but their wives all bright with berries) and gay rowans, all bowed and rose again, shouting, “Aslan, Aslan!” in their various husky or creaking or wave-like voices.

The crowd and the dance round Aslan (for it had become a dance once more) grew so thick and rapid that Lucy was confused. She never saw where certain other people came from who were soon capering about among the trees. One was a youth, dressed only in a fawn-skin, with vine-leaves wreathed in his curly hair. His face would have been almost too pretty for a boy’s, if it had not looked so extremely wild. You felt, as Edmund said when he saw him a few days later, “There’s a chap who might do anything—absolutely anything.” He seemed to have a great many names—Bromios, Bassareus, and the Ram were three of them. There were a lot of girls with him, as wild as he. There was even, unexpectedly, someone on a donkey. And everybody was laughing: and everybody was shouting out, “Euan, euan, eu-oi-oi-oi.”



“Is it a Romp, Aslan?” cried the youth. And apparently it was. But nearly everyone seemed to have a different idea as to what they were playing. It may have been Tig, but Lucy never discovered who was It. It was rather like Blind Man’s Buff, only everyone behaved as if they were blindfolded. It was not unlike Hunt the Slipper, but the slipper was never found. What made it more complicated was that the man on the donkey, who was old and enormously fat, began calling out at once, “Refreshments! Time for refreshments,” and falling off his donkey and being bundled on to it again by the others, while the donkey was under the impression that the whole thing was a circus and tried to give a display of walking on its hind legs. And all the time there were more and more vine leaves everywhere. And soon not only leaves but vines. They were climbing up everything. They were

running up the legs of the tree people and circling round their necks. Lucy put up her hands to push back her hair and found she was pushing back vine branches. The donkey was a mass of them. His tail was completely entangled and something dark was nodding between his ears. Lucy looked again and saw it was a bunch of grapes. After that it was mostly grapes—overhead and underfoot and all around.

“Refreshments! Refreshments,” roared the old man. Everyone began eating, and whatever hothouses your people may have, you have never tasted such grapes. Really good grapes, firm and tight on the outside, but bursting into cool sweetness when you put them into your mouth, were one of the things the girls had never had quite enough of before. Here, there were more than anyone could possibly want, and no table-manners at all. One saw sticky and stained fingers everywhere, and, though mouths were full, the laughter never ceased nor the yodeling cries of *Euan, euan, eu-oi-oi-oi-oi*, till all of a sudden everyone felt at the same moment that the game (whatever it was), and the feast, ought to be over, and everyone flopped down breathless on the ground and turned their faces to Aslan to hear what he would say next.

At that moment the sun was just rising and Lucy remembered something and whispered to Susan,

“I say, Su, I know who they are.”

“Who?”

“The boy with the wild face is Bacchus and the old one on the donkey is Silenus. Don’t you remember Mr. Tumnus telling us about them long ago?”

“Yes, of course. But I say, Lu—”

“What?”

“I wouldn’t have felt safe with Bacchus and all his wild girls if we’d met them without Aslan.”

“I should think not,” said Lucy.

HOOFTUK 11

Die leeu brul



Toe die hele geselskap uiteindelik wakker is, moet Lucy haar storie vir die vierde keer vertel. Die ver- blufte stilte wat volg, is so ontmoedigend as wat dit maar kan wees.

“Ek kan niks sien nie,” sê Peter nadat hy gekyk het tot sy oë pyn. “Kan jy,

Susan?"

"Nee, natuurlik kan ek nie," jak Susan hom af. "Want daar is niks om te sien nie. Sy het gedroom. Loop slaap, Lucy."

"En ek hoop," sê Lucy in 'n bewerige stem, "julle sal saam met my kom. Want - want ek sal saam met hom moet gaan, of enigiemand anders nou kom of nie."

"Moenie twak praat nie, Lucy," sê Susan. "Jy kan mos nie op jou eie hier wegstap nie. Keer haar, Peter. Sy's vervlaks stout."

"Ek sal saam met haar gaan as sy dan *moet* gaan," sê Edmund. "Sy was vantevore al reg."

"Ek weet sy was," sê Peter. "En sy was vanoggend dalk ook reg. Ons het beslis nie 'n maklike tydjie in daar- die ravyn gehad nie. Maar tog - hierdie tyd van die nag? En hoekom is Aslan vir ons onsigbaar? Hy was nog nooit voorheen nie. Dis nie hoe hy is nie. Wat dink die LKV?"

"O, ek dink niks," sê die dwerg. "As julle gaan, gaan ek natuurlik saam met julle en as jul geselskap verdeel, gaan ek saam met die hoofkoning. Dis my plig teenoor hom en koning Kaspian. Maar as julle my beskeie me- ning wil hê, ek is 'n eenvoudige dwerg wat nie dink daar is veel kans om in die nag 'n pad te kry wat ons nie in die dag kon kry nie. En ek dink niks van towerleeus wat kan praat, maar nie praat nie, en vriendelike leeus wat vir ons niks goeds doen nie en hengse groot leeus wat nie- mand kan sien nie. Dis wat my betref alles blare en boon- tjieranke."

"Hy stamp sy poot op die grond dat ons moet gou maak," sê Lucy. "Ons moet *nou* gaan. Ten minste, ek moet."

"Jy't geen reg om die res van ons so te wil dwing nie. Dis vier teen een en jy's die jongste," sê Susan.

"Ag, komaan," grom Edmund. "Ons moet gaan. Of ons sal geen rus hê nie." Hy is vas van plan om vir Lucy te ondersteun, maar vies omdat hy sy nagrus verloor, dus kry hy haar terug deur alles so nors moontlik te doen.

"Voorwaarts mars," sê Peter moeg en steek sy arm deur sy skild se band en sit sy helm op. By enige ander geleentheid sou hy iets gaafs vir Lucy gesê het, want sy is sy gunstelingsuster, en hy weet hoe goor sy moet voel. Hy weet ook dat wat ook al gebeur het, nie haar skuld is nie. Maar hy kan nie anders as om 'n bietjie ergerlik te voel nie.

Susan is die ergste. "Sê nou *ek* begin my soos Lucy gedra," sê sy. "En ek dreig om hier te bly of die res van julle nou verder gaan of nie. Ek dink nogal ek gaan."

"Gehoorsaam die hoofkoning, u Majesteit," sê Trum- pels, "en laat ons

weg wees. As ek dan nie mag slaap nie, sal ek eerder aanstap as om hier te staan en ginnegaap.”

En so is hulle uiteindelik op pad. Lucy stap voor. Sy byt haar lip en probeer om nie al die goed waaraan sy dink vir Susan te sê nie. Maar sy vergeet alles toe sy haar oë op Aslan rig. Hy draai ora en stap teen ’n stadi-gepas aan, omtrent dertig tree voor hulle. Die ander het slegs Lucy se aanwysings om hulle te help, want Aslan is nie net vir hulle onsigbaar nie, hulle kan hom ook nie hoor nie. Sy groot katagtige pote maak geen geluid op die gras nie.

Hy lei hulle regsom die dansende bome — of hulle nog dans weet niemand nie, want Lucy se oë is op die leeu en die res se oë is op Lucy — en nader aan die afgrond. Kei- stene en keteltromme, dink Trumpels. Ek hoop hierdie malligheid eindig nie in ’n maanligklimmerij en gebreek- te nekke nie.

Vir ’n lang tyd stap Aslan langs die kant van die afgrond. Dan kom hulle by ’n plek waar ’n paar klein boompies reg teen die kant groei. Hy draai om en verdwyn tussen hulle. Lucy hou haar asem op, want dit lyk asof hy oor die rand geval het, maar sy is te besig om hom in die oog te hou om te stop om hieroor te dink. Sy versnel haar pas en is spoedig ook tussen die bome. Toe sy afkyk, sien sy ’n steil, smal paadjie wat tussen die rotse deur ondertoe kronkel en Aslan wat daarlangs stap. Hy draai om en kyk na haar met sy liefdevolle oë. Lucy klap haar hande en begin om agter hom aan te skarrel. Van agter haar hoor sy die ander roep, “Haai, Lucy! Oppas! Genade! Jy’s reg op die kant van die afgrond. Kom terug - ” en toe, ’n oomblik later, Edmund se stem wat sê, “Nee, sy’s reg. Daar is ’n pad ondertoe.”

Halfpad ondertoe haal Edmund haar in.

“Kyk!” sê hy opgewonde. “Kyk! Wat is daardie skadu- wee wat daar voor ons ondertoe kruip?”

“Dis sy skaduwee,” sê Lucy.

“Lyk my jy’s reg, Lu,” sê Edmund. “Ek kan nie dink hoe ek dit vantevore nie kon sien nie. Maar waar is hy?”

“By sy skaduwee, natuurlik. Kan jy horn regtig nie sien nie?”

“Wei, ek het amper gedink ek het - vir ’n oomblik. Die lig is so snaaks.”

“Stap aan, koning Edmund, stap,” kom Trumpels se stem van agter en bo hulle, en toe, verder na agter en nog feitlik heel bo, sê Peter se stem, “Ag, kom aan, Susan. Gee my jou hand, ’n Baba kan daar afkom. Hou op kerm.”

Binne ’n paar minute is hulle onder en vul die gebruis van water hul ore. Ligvoets soos ’n kat tree Aslan van klip tot klip oor die stroom. In die middel gaan hy staan en buk om te drink en toe lig hy sy ruie kop en kyk drup- pend van water na hulle toe. Hierdie keer sien Edmund hom. “O Aslan!” roep hy uit

en storm vorentoe. Maar die leeu swaai om en begin teen die hang aan die verste kant van die Palmiet opstap.

“Peter, Peter!” roep Edmund uit. “Het jy hom gesien?”

“Ek het iets gesien,” sê Peter. “Maar dis moeilik in hierdie maanlig. Maar kom ons gaan aan en drie hoera’s vir Lucy. Ek is nou ook glad nie meer so moeg nie.”

Sonder huiwering lei Aslan hulle na links en op teen die hange. Die hele uitstappie voel soos ’n vreemde droom — die bruisende rivier, die nat grys gras, die glimmende kranse waarnatoe hulle stap en die wonderlike stil dier wat die hele tyd voor hulle loop. Almal behalwe Susan en die dwerg kan hom nou sien.

Uiteindelik kom hulle by nog ’n steil pad wat teen die verste hange na bo lei. Hierdie hange is baie hoër as dié waarteen hulle afgekom het, en die roete na bo is ’n lang en vervelige sigsagtog. Gelukkig hang die maan reg bo die kloof sodat albei kante verlig is.

Lucy is pootuit toe Aslan se stert en agterbene oor die rand verdwyn, maar met ’n laaste bietjie inspanning skarrel sy agter hom aan en kom met bewende bene en blasend by die heuwel aan waar hulle nog die hele tyd wil wees sedert hulle Glaswater verlaat het. Die lang, geleidelike helling (heide en gras en ’n paar baie groot rotse wat wit in die maanlig skyn) strek tot bo waar dit omtrent ’n halfmyl verder in ’n glinstering van bome verdwyn. Sy ken dit. Dit is die heuwel van die Steentafel.

Met rinkelende maliekolders klim die res agter haar aan. Aslan glip voor hulle uit en hulle loop agterna.

“Lucy,” sê Susan in ’n klein stemmetjie.

“Ja?” sê Lucy.

“Ek sien hom nou. Ek is jammer.”

“Dit maak nie saak nie.”

“Maar dis baie erger as wat jy dink. Ek het regtig geglo dit was hy, gister. Toe hy ons gewaarsku het om nie onder na die dennewoud toe te gaan nie. En ek het regtig geglo dit was hy vannag toe jy ons kom wakker maak het. Ek bedoel, diep binne-in. Of ek sou, as ek myself toegelaat het. Maar ek wou net uit daardie woude kom en — en — ag, ek weet nie. Wat gaan ek vir hom sê?”

“Dalk hoef jy nie eintlik iets te sê nie,” stel Lucy voor.

Kort daarna is hulle by die bome en anderkant uit en kan die kinders die groot heuwel sien, Aslan se Hoop, wat sedert hul tyd oor die Tafel gebou is.

“Ons kant hou nie juis goed wag nie,” prewel Trumpeks. “Iemand moes al lankal halt geroep het.”

“Sjuut,” sê die ander vier, want Aslan het gestop. Hy draai om en kyk na

hulle en lyk só majestueus dat hulle so bly voel as wat iemand wat bang is maar kan voel, en so bang as wat iemand wat bly is, kan wees. Die seuns stap vorentoe en Lucy laat hulle verbykom. Susan en die dwerg deins terug.

“O Aslan,” sê koning Peter en val op een knie en lig die leeu se groot poot tot teen sy gesig. “Ek is so bly. En ek is jammer. Ek het hulle van die begin af verkeerd ge- lei, en veral gisteroggend.”

“My liefste seun,” sê Aslan.

Toe draai hy en groet vir Edmund. “Knap gedaan,” is sy woorde.

En toe, na ’n vreeslike stilte, sê die diep stem, “Susan.” Susan antwoord nie en die ander dink sy huil. “Jy het na jou vrese geluister, kind,” sê Aslan. “Kom, laat ek oor jou asemhaal. Vergeet daarvan. Voel jy nou weer dapper?”

“’n Bietjie, Aslan,” sê Susan.

“En nou!” sê Aslan in ’n baie harder stem met ’n sweem van ’n brul, terwyl sy stert teen sy flanke slaan. “En nou, waar is daardie dwerg, die beroemde swaard- vegter en boogskutter wat nie in leeu se glo nie? Kom hier, seun van die aarde, kom HIER!” - die laaste woord is nie meer bloot ’n sweem van ’n brul nie, maar so amper die ware Jakob. “Grafte en grafstene!” snak Trumpels in ’n spookstem. Die kinders wat Aslan goed genoeg ken om te weet hy hou baie van die dwerg is nie ontstel nie, maar vir Trumpels wat nog nooit tevore ’n leeu gesien het nie, wat nog te sê hiêrdie leeu, is dit heeltemal anders. Hy doen die enigste verstandige ding waaraan hy kan dink. Pleks van weghardloop, steier hy na Aslan toe.

Aslan spring. Het jy al gesien hoe ’n baie klein katjie in die ma-kat se mond gedra word? Dit is presies net so. Die dwerg hang in ’n klein, miserabele bondeltjie in Aslan se mond. Die leeu gee hom een skud sodat sy wapenrusting ratel, en toe - hup! - gooi hy die dwerg die lug in. Hy is so veilig asof hy in die bed is, hoewel dit nie vir hom so voel nie. Toe hy afkom, vang die groot ferweelpote hom so sag soos ’n moeder se arms en sit hom (boonop regop) op die grond neer.

“Seun van die aarde, sal ons vriende wees?” vra Aslan.

“Ja - ha - ha,” blaas die dwerg wat nog nie sy asem teruggekry het nie.

“Nou ja,” sê Aslan. “Die maan is besig om onder te gaan. Kyk agter julle: die dag is aan die breek. Daar is nie tyd om te mors nie. Julie drie, julle seuns van Adam en seun van die aarde, gaan die heuwel binne en hanteer dit wat julle daar aantref.”

Die dwerg is nog steeds stom en nie een van die seuns waag dit om te vra of Aslan gaan saamkom nie. Al drie trek hul swaarde uit en salueer, dan draai hulle om en stap die skemerte rinkelend tegemoet. Lucy sien daar is nie ’n teken van moegheid op hul gesigte te bespeur nie. Sowel die hoofkoning as

koning Edmund lyk meer soos mans as seuns.

Die meisies staan styf teen Aslan en kyk hulle agter-
na tot hulle verdwyn. Die lig is besig om te verander. Laag onder in die ooste
glinster Aravir, Narnia se og- gendster, soos 'n klein maantjie. Aslan lyk
groter as tevore: hy lig sy kop, skud sy maanhare en brul.

Die geluid, aanvanklik diep en polsend soos 'n orrel wat op 'n lae noot
begin, dan styg en harder word en nog harder tot die aarde en die lug daarvan
skud. Dit styg op van die heuwel en sweef oor die hele Narnia. Onder in
Miraz se kamp word mans wakker en staar met bleek ge- sigte na mekaar en
gryp hul wapens. Ver onder in die Grootrivier waar dit nou op sy koudste is,
rys nimfe se koppe en skouers en die riviergod se groot wieragtige baard uit
die water. Aan die ander kant, in elke veld en woud, wip hase se spits ore uit
hul gate, voëls se slape- rige koppe kom onder hul vlerke uit, uile hoe-hoe,
jakkal- se blaf, krimpvarkies knor, die bome roer. In dorpe en stede druk
moeders hul babas styf teen hul bors vas en staar met wilde oë om hulle.
Honde tjank en mans spring op en val rond op soek na lig. Ver weg aan die
noorde- like grens loer die bergreuse deur hul kastele se donker poorte.

Wat Lucy en Susan sien, is 'n donker iets wat van alle kante oor die
heuwels na hulle toe aankom. Eers lyk dit soos 'n swart mis wat oor die grond
kruip, toe soos die stormagtige golwe van 'n swart see wat hoër en hoër styg
soos hulle nader kom, en toe lyk dit uiteindelik na wat dit is — woude wat
beweeg. Dit lyk asof al die bome in die wêreld na Aslan toe kom. Maar hoe
nader hulle kom, hoe minder lyk hulle na bome en toe die hele skare al om
Lucy, buigend en knieknikkend, hul lang, dun arms na Aslan swaai, sien Lucy
hulle het menslike vorms. Bleek berkemeisies gooi hul koppe agteroor,
wilgervroue stoot hul hare uit hul broeiende gesigte om na Aslan te staar, die
koninginagtige beuke staan hom roerloos en aanbid, woeste eikemans, maer
en mistroostige olms, bossiekop steekpalms (die mans donker van kleur, maar
die vroue helder van die bessies) en vrolike lysterbes- bome buig en kom
orent en skree, "Aslan, Aslan!" in hees of krakerige of golwende stemme.

Die skare en die gedans om Aslan (want dit het weer 'n dans geword) het
so 'n gedrang en so vinnig geword dat Lucy se kop draai. Sy sien nie eens
waarvandaan die ander mense gekom het wat nou tussen die bome bok- spring
nie. Een is 'n jong seun wat net 'n takbokvel dra en wingerdblare in sy
krulhare het. Sy gesig sou amper te mooi vir 'n seun gewees het, as dit nie so
verskriklik wild was nie. 'n Mens voel, soos Edmund gesê het toe hy hom 'n
paar dae later sien, "Dis 'n ou wat: enigiets - ab- soluut enigiets kan doen."
Dit klink asof hy baie name het - Bromios, Bassareus en Die Ram iss drie
daarvan. Daar is baie meisies by hom wat net so wild soos hy is. Daar is selfs,

heel onverwags, iemand op 'n donkie. En almal lag en almal skree, “Euan, euan, eu-oi-oi-oi!”

“Is dit 'n speletjie, Aslan?” skree die sieun. En skyn- baar is dit. Maar dit lyk asof feitlik almal 'n ander speletjie speel. Dit kan aan-aan wees, maar Lucy kan glad nie agterkom wie aan is nie. Dit is effens soos blindemol, dis net dat almal aangaan asof hulle geblinddoek is. Dit is ook nogal soos aspaai, maar niemand kruip weg nie. Wat dit nog meer ingewikkeld maak, is dat die man op die donkie wat oud en verskriklik vet is, dadelik begin roep, “Verversings! Tyd vir verversings!” en van sy donkie af- val en weer deur die ander opgehêp word, terwyl die donkie skynbaar dink die hele besigheid is 'n sirkus en op sy agterpote probeer loop. Die hele tyd verskyn daar al hoe meer wingerdblare oraloor. En binnekort is daar nie net blare nie, maar wingerdlate wat teen alles opslinger: teen die boommense se bene en om hul nekke. Lucy lig haar hande om haar hare terug te stoot en kom agter sy druk wingerdtakke terug. Die donkie is die ene wingerdblare. Sy stert is behoorlik verstregtel tussen sy ore dril iets donkers. Toe Lucy weer kyk, sien sy dit is 'n tros druiwe. Daarna is dit meestal druiwe - bo hul koppe en onder hul voete en oral om hulle.

“Verversings! Verversings,” brul die ou man. Almal begin eet en watter soort kweekhuise julle ook al mag hê, sulke druiwe het julle nog nie geproe nie. Van sulke goeie druiwe, ferm en styf buite, en 'n koel soetheid in jou mond, kon die meisies nog nooit genoeg kry nie. Hier is meer as wat enigiemand ooit sal kan eet en hoege- naamd geen tafelmaniere nie. Oral is taai en gevlekte vingers te sien en hoewel almal se monde vol is, hou die gelag en die geskree van *Euan, euan, eu-oi-oi-oi-oi* nie op nie, tot almal plotseling voel die speletjie (wat dit ook al mag wees) is oor en die fees behoort ook oor te wees. Toe slaan almal uitasem op die grand neer en draai hul gesigte na Aslan om te hoor wat hy volgende te sê het.

Op daardie oomblik kom die son net op en Lucy ont- hou iets en fluister vir Susan, “Hoor hier, Susan, ek weet wie hulle is.”

“Wie?”

“Die seun met die wilde gesig is Bacchus en die oue op die donkie is Silenus. Onthou jy nie meneer Tumnus het lank gelede vir ons van hulle vertel nie?”

“Ja, natuurlik. Maar hoor hier, Lu — ”

“Wat?”

“Ek sou nie veilig saam met Bacchus en al sy wilde meisies gevoel het as ons hulle sonder Aslan moes raak- loop nie.”

“Ek ook nie,” sê Lucy.

CHAPTER TWELVE

SORCERY AND SUDDEN VENGEANCE

MEANWHILE TRUMPKIN AND THE TWO boys arrived at the dark little stone archway which led into the inside of the Mound, and two sentinel badgers (the white patches on their cheeks were all Edmund could see of them) leaped up with bared teeth and asked them in snarling voices, "Who goes there?"

"Trumpkin," said the Dwarf. "Bringing the High King of Narnia out of the far past."

The badgers nosed at the boys' hands. "At last," they said. "At last."

"Give us a light, friends," said Trumpkin.

The badgers found a torch just inside the arch and Peter lit it and handed it to Trumpkin. "The D.L.F. had better lead," he said. "We don't know our way about this place."

Trumpkin took the torch and went ahead into the dark tunnel. It was a cold, black, musty place, with an occasional bat fluttering in the torchlight, and plenty of cobwebs. The boys, who had been mostly in the open air ever since that morning at the railway station, felt as if they were going into a trap or a prison.

"I say, Peter," whispered Edmund. "Look at those carvings on the walls. Don't they look old? And yet we're older than that. When we were last here, they hadn't been made."

"Yes," said Peter. "That makes one think."

The Dwarf went on ahead and then turned to the right, and then to the left, and then down some steps, and then to the left again. Then at last they saw a light ahead—light from under a door. And now for the first time they heard voices, for they had come to the door of the central chamber. The voices inside were angry ones. Someone was talking so loudly that the approach of the boys and the Dwarf had not been heard.

"Don't like the sound of that," whispered Trumpkin to Peter. "Let's listen for a moment." All three stood perfectly still on the outside of the door.



"You know well enough," said a voice ("That's the King," whispered Trumpkin), "why the Horn was not blown at sunrise this morning. Have you forgotten that Miraz fell upon us almost before Trumpkin had gone, and we were fighting for our lives for the space of three hours and more? I blew it when first I had a breathing space."

"I'm not likely to forget it," came the angry voice, "when my Dwarfs bore the brunt of the attack and one in five of them fell." ("That's Nikabrik," whispered Trumpkin.)

"For shame, Dwarf," came a thick voice ("Trufflehunter's," said Trumpkin). "We all did as much as the Dwarfs and none more than the King."

"Tell that tale your own way for all I care," answered Nikabrik. "But whether it was that the Horn was blown too late, or whether there was no magic in it, no help has come. You, you great clerk, you master magician, you know-all; are you still asking us to hang our hopes on Aslan and King Peter and all the rest of it?"

"I must confess—I cannot deny it—that I am deeply disappointed in the results of the operation," came the answer. ("That'll be Doctor Cornelius," said Trumpkin.)

"To speak plainly," said Nikabrik, "your wallet's empty, your eggs addled, your fish uncaught, your promises broken. Stand aside then and let others work. And that is why—"

"The help will come," said Trufflehunter. "I stand by Aslan. Have patience, like us beasts. The help will come. It may be even now at the door."

"Pah!" snarled Nikabrik. "You badgers would have us wait till the sky falls and we can all catch larks. I tell you we *can't* wait. Food is running short; we lose more than we can afford at every encounter; our followers are slipping away."

"And why?" asked Trufflehunter. "I'll tell you why. Because it is noised among them that we have called on the Kings of old and the Kings of old have not answered. The last words Trumpkin spoke before he went (and went, most likely, to his death) were, 'If you must blow the Horn, do not let the army know why you blow it or what you hope from it.' But that same evening everyone seemed to know."

"You'd better have shoved your gray snout in a hornets' nest, Badger, than suggest that I am the blab," said Nikabrik. "Take it back, or—"

"Oh, stop it, both of you," said King Caspian. "I want to know what it is that Nikabrik keeps on hinting we should do. But before that, I want to know who those two strangers are whom he has brought into our council and who stand there with their ears open and their mouths shut."

"They are friends of mine," said Nikabrik. "And what better right have you yourself to be here than that you are a friend of Trumpkin's and the Badgers? And what right has that old dotard in the black gown to be here except that he is your friend? Why am I to be the only one who can't bring in his friends?"

"His Majesty is the King to whom you have sworn allegiance," said

Trufflehunter sternly.

"Court manners, court manners," sneered Nikabrik. "But in this hole we may talk plainly. You know—and he knows—that this Telmarine boy will be king of nowhere and nobody in a week unless we can help him out of the trap in which he sits."

"Perhaps," said Cornelius, "your new friends would like to speak for themselves? You there, who and what are you?"

"Worshipful Master Doctor," came a thin, whining voice. "So please you, I'm only a poor old woman, I am, and very obliged to his Worshipful Dwarfship for his friendship, I'm sure. His Majesty, bless his handsome face, has no need to be afraid of an old woman that's nearly doubled up with the rheumatics and hasn't two sticks to put under her kettle. I have some poor little skill—not like yours, Master Doctor, of course—in small spells and cantrips that I'd be glad to use against our enemies if it was agreeable to all concerned. For I hate 'em. Oh yes. No one hates better than me."

"That is all most interesting and—er—satisfactory," said Doctor Cornelius. "I think I now know what you are, Madam. Perhaps your other friend, Nikabrik, would give some account of himself?"

A dull, gray voice at which Peter's flesh crept replied, "I'm hunger. I'm thirst. Where I bite, I hold till I die, and even after death they must cut out my mouthful from my enemy's body and bury it with me. I can fast a hundred years and not die. I can lie a hundred nights on the ice and not freeze. I can drink a river of blood and not burst. Show me your enemies."

"And it is in the presence of these two that you wish to disclose your plan?" said Caspian.

"Yes," said Nikabrik. "And by their help that I mean to execute it."

There was a minute or two during which Trumpkin and the boys could hear Caspian and his two friends speaking in low voices but could not make out what they were saying. Then Caspian spoke aloud.

"Well, Nikabrik," he said, "we will hear your plan."

There was a pause so long that the boys began to wonder if Nikabrik were ever going to begin; when he did, it was in a lower voice, as if he himself did not much like what he was saying.

"All said and done," he muttered, "none of us knows the truth about the ancient days in Narnia. Trumpkin believed none of the stories. I was ready to put them to the trial. We tried first the Horn and it has failed. If there ever was a High King Peter and a Queen Susan and a King Edmund and a Queen Lucy, then either they have not heard us, or they cannot come, or they are our enemies—"

"Or they are on the way," put in Trufflehunter.

"You can go on saying that till Miraz has fed us all to his dogs. As I was saying, we have tried one link in the chain of old legends, and it

has done us no good. Well. But when your sword breaks, you draw your dagger. The stories tell of other powers besides the ancient Kings and Queens. How if we could call *them* up?"

"If you mean Aslan," said Trufflehunter, "it's all one calling on him and on the Kings. They were his servants. If he will not send them (but I make no doubt he will), is he more likely to come himself?"

"No. You're right there," said Nikabrik. "Aslan and the Kings go together. Either Aslan is dead, or he is not on our side. Or else something stronger than himself keeps him back. And if he did come—how do we know he'd be our friend? He was not always a good friend to Dwarfs by all that's told. Not even to all beasts. Ask the Wolves. And anyway, he was in Narnia only once that I ever heard of, and he didn't stay long. You may drop Aslan out of the reckoning. I was thinking of someone else."

There was no answer, and for a few minutes it was so still that Edmund could hear the wheezy and snuffling breath of the Badger.

"Who do you mean?" said Caspian at last.

"I mean a power so much greater than Aslan's that it held Narnia spellbound for years and years, if the stories are true."

"The White Witch!" cried three voices all at once, and from the noise Peter guessed that three people had leaped to their feet.

"Yes," said Nikabrik very slowly and distinctly, "I mean the Witch. Sit down again. Don't all take fright at a name as if you were children. We want power: and we want a power that will be on our side. As for power, do not the stories say that the Witch defeated Aslan, and bound him, and killed him on that very stone which is over there, just beyond the light?"

"But they also say that he came to life again," said the Badger sharply.

"Yes, they say," answered Nikabrik, "but you'll notice that we hear precious little about anything he did afterward. He just fades out of the story. How do you explain that, if he really came to life? Isn't it much more likely that he didn't, and that the stories say nothing more about him because there was nothing more to say?"

"He established the Kings and Queens," said Caspian.

"A King who has just won a great battle can usually establish himself without the help of a performing lion," said Nikabrik. There was a fierce growl, probably from Trufflehunter.

"And anyway," Nikabrik continued, "what came of the Kings and their reign? They faded too. But it's very different with the Witch. They say she ruled for a hundred years: a hundred years of winter. There's power, if you like. There's something practical."

"But, heaven and earth!" said the King, "haven't we always been told that she was the worst enemy of all? Wasn't she a tyrant ten times

worse than Miraz?"

"Perhaps," said Nikabrik in a cold voice. "Perhaps she *was* for you humans, if there were any of you in those days. Perhaps she was for some of the beasts. She stamped out the Beavers, I dare say; at least there are none of them in Narnia now. But she got on all right with us Dwarfs. I'm a Dwarf and I stand by my own people. *We're* not afraid of the Witch."

"But you've joined with us," said Trufflehunter.

"Yes, and a lot of good it has done my people, so far," snapped Nikabrik. "Who is sent on all the dangerous raids? The Dwarfs. Who goes short when the rations fail? The Dwarfs. Who—?"

"Lies! All lies!" said the Badger.

"And so," said Nikabrik, whose voice now rose to a scream, "if you can't help my people, I'll go to someone who can."

"Is this open treason, Dwarf?" asked the King.

"Put that sword back in its sheath, Caspian," said Nikabrik. "Murder at council, eh? Is that your game? Don't be fool enough to try it. Do you think I'm afraid of you? There's three on my side, and three on yours."

"Come on, then," snarled Trufflehunter, but he was immediately interrupted.

"Stop, stop, stop," said Doctor Cornelius. "You go on too fast. The Witch is dead. All the stories agree on that. What does Nikabrik mean by calling on the Witch?"

That gray and terrible voice which had spoken only once before said, "Oh, *is* she?"

And then the shrill, whining voice began, "Oh, bless his heart, his dear little Majesty needn't mind about the White Lady—that's what *we* call her—being dead. The Worshipful Master Doctor is only making game of a poor old woman like me when he says that. Sweet Master Doctor, learned Master Doctor, who ever heard of a witch that really died? You can always get them back."

"Call her up," said the gray voice. "We are all ready. Draw the circle. Prepare the blue fire."

Above the steadily increasing growl of the Badger and Cornelius's sharp "What?" rose the voice of King Caspian like thunder.

"So that is your plan, Nikabrik! Black sorcery and the calling up of an accursed ghost. And I see who your companions are—a Hag and a Wer-Wolf!"

The next minute or so was very confused. There was an animal roaring, a clash of steel; the boys and Trumpkin rushed in; Peter had a glimpse of a horrible, gray, gaunt creature, half man and half wolf, in the very act of leaping upon a boy about his own age, and Edmund saw a badger and a Dwarf rolling on the floor in a sort of cat fight.

Trumpkin found himself face to face with the Hag. Her nose and chin stuck out like a pair of nutcrackers, her dirty gray hair was flying about her face and she had just got Doctor Cornelius by the throat. At one slash of Trumpkin's sword her head rolled on the floor. Then the light was knocked over and it was all swords, teeth, claws, fists, and boots for about sixty seconds. Then silence.



"Are you all right, Ed?"

"I—I think so," panted Edmund. "I've got that brute Nikabrik, but he's still alive."

"Weights and water-bottles!" came an angry voice. "It's *me* you're sitting on. Get off. You're like a young elephant."

"Sorry, D.L.F.," said Edmund. "Is that better?"

"Ow! No!" bellowed Trumpkin. "You're putting your boot in my mouth. Go away."

"Is King Caspian anywhere?" asked Peter.

"I'm here," said a rather faint voice. "Something bit me."

They all heard the noise of someone striking a match. It was Edmund. The little flame showed his face, looking pale and dirty. He blundered about for a little, found the candle (they were no longer using the lamp, for they had run out of oil), set it on the table, and lit it. When the flame rose clear, several people scrambled to their feet. Six faces blinked at one another in the candlelight.

"We don't seem to have any enemies left," said Peter. "There's the Hag, dead." (He turned his eyes quickly away from her.) "And Nikabrik, dead too. And I suppose this thing is a Wer-Wolf. It's so long since I've seen one. Wolf's head and man's body. That means he was just turning from man into wolf at the moment he was killed. And you, I suppose, are King Caspian?"

"Yes," said the other boy. "But I've no idea who you are."

"It's the High King, King Peter," said Trumpkin.

"Your Majesty is very welcome," said Caspian.

"And so is *your* Majesty," said Peter. "I haven't come to take your place, you know, but to put you into it."

"Your Majesty," said another voice at Peter's elbow. He turned and found himself face to face with the Badger. Peter leaned forward, put his arms round the beast and kissed the furry head: it wasn't a girlish thing for him to do, because he was the High King.

"Best of badgers," he said. "You never doubted us all through."

“No credit to me, your Majesty,” said Trufflehunter. “I’m a beast and we don’t change. I’m a badger, what’s more, and we hold on.”

“I am sorry for Nikabrik,” said Caspian, “though he hated me from the first moment he saw me. He had gone sour inside from long suffering and hating. If we had won quickly he might have become a good Dwarf in the days of peace. I don’t know which of us killed him. I’m glad of that.”

“You’re bleeding,” said Peter.

“Yes, I’m bitten,” said Caspian. “It was that—that wolf thing.” Cleaning and bandaging the wound took a long time, and when it was done Trumpkin said, “Now. Before everything else we want some breakfast.”

“But not here,” said Peter.

“No,” said Caspian with a shudder. “And we must send someone to take away the bodies.”

“Let the vermin be flung into a pit,” said Peter. “But the Dwarf we will give to his people to be buried in their own fashion.”

They breakfasted at last in another of the dark cellars of Aslan’s How. It was not such a breakfast as they would have chosen, for Caspian and Cornelius were thinking of venison pasties, and Peter and Edmund of buttered eggs and hot coffee, but what everyone got was a little bit of cold bear-meat (out of the boys’ pockets), a lump of hard cheese, an onion, and a mug of water. But, from the way they fell to, anyone would have supposed it was delicious.

HOOFTUK 12

Towery en onverwagte weerwraak



Intussen het Trumpels en die twee seuns by die klein donker klipsuileboog gekom wat na die binnekant van die heuwel lei. Twee ratels wat wag staan (die wit kolle op hul wange was al wat Edmund van hulle kon sien), spring met ontblote tande op en vra in snouende stemme, “Wie’s daar?”

“Trumpels,” sê die dwerg. “Ek bring die hoofkoning van Narnia terug uit die verre verlede.”

Die ratels snuif aan die seuns se hande. “Uiteindelik,” sê hulle. “Uiteindelik.”

“Maak vir ons lig, vriende,” sê Trumpels.

Die ratels gaan haal ’n fakkel net binne die suileboog en Peter steek dit

aan en gee dit vir Trumpels. “Die LKV moet maar voor stap,” sê hy. “Ons ken nie die pad nie.” Trumpels neem die fakkel en stap vooruit in die donker tunnel af. Dit is ’n koue, swart, muwwe plek met vler- muise wat elke nou en dan in die fakkellig fladder en baie spinnerakke. Die seuns, wat sedert die oggend by die stasie nog die hele tyd in die buitelug was, voel asof hulle ’n lokval of ’n tronk binnegaan.

“Hoor hier, Peter,” fluister Edmund. “Kyk net al die graveerwerk op die mure. Lyk dit nie oud nie? En tog is ons ouer as dit. Toe ons laas hier was, was dit nog nie hier nie.”

“Ja,” sê Peter. “Dit laat ’n mens dink.”

Die dwerg gaan verder, draai regs, dan links en af met ’n paar trappe en dan weer links. Uiteindelik sien hulle ’n lig voor hulle - ’n lig onder ’n deur. En nou hoor hulle vir die eerste keer stemme, want hulle staan voor die deur na die heel binneste kamer. Die stemme daarbinne klink kwaai. Iemand praat so hard dat niemand die seuns en die dwerg hoor aankom nie.

“Die klank staan my nie aan nie,” fluister Trumpels vir Peter. “Kom ons luister ’n bietjie.” Al drie staan doodstil voor die deur.

“Julle weet goed genoeg,” sê ’n stem (“Dis die koning,” fluister Trumpels), “hoekom die horing nie vanoggend met sonopkoms geblaas is nie. Het julle vergeet Miraz het ons aangeval feitlik net na Trumpels hier weg is en dat ons meer as drie uur lank vir ons lewe moes veg? Ek het dit geblaas so gou ek ’n kans gekry het.”

“Ek sal dit nie maklik vergeet nie,” kom die kwaai stem, “nie met my dwerge wat die spit moes afbyt sodat een uit elke vyf gesneuwel het nie.” (“Dis Nikabrik,” fluister Trumpels.)

“Skaam jou, dwerg,” kom ’n dik stem (“Truffelsoeker s’n,” sê Trumpels). “Ons almal het net soveel soos die dwerge gedoen, en niemand meer as die koning nie.”

“Verdraai die storie soos dit jou pas, dit traak my nie,” antwoord Nikabrik. “Maar of dit nou is omdat die horing te laat geblaas is, of omdat daar geen toorkrag in is nie, geen hulp het opgedaag nie. Jy, groot klerk, meester- towenaar, betersweter, verwag jy nog steeds ons moet ons hoop op daardie Aslan en koning Peter en die res vestig?” “Ek moet erken - ek kan dit nie ontken nie — ek is diep teleurgestel in die uitslag van die skermutseling,” kom die antwoord. (“Dis doktor Kornelius,” sê Trumpels.)

“Om dit nou reguit te stel,” sê Nikabrik, “jou beursie is leeg, jou eiers vrot, jou vis nie gevang nie, jou beloftes verbreek. Gee pad sodat ons ander die werk kan doen. Dis hoekom — ” “Die hulp sal opdaag,” sê Truffelsoeker. “Ek staan agter Aslan. Wees geduldig, soos ons diere. Die hulp sal kom. Dis

dalk al voor die deur.”

“Ba!” snou Nikabrik. “Julle ratels sal ons laat wag tot die hemel neerstort en ons almal sterre kan vang. Ek sê jou ons *kan* nie wag nie. Kos is skaars; ons verloor met elke geveg meer as wat ons kan bekostig; ons volgelinge is besig om weg te glip.”

“En hoekom?” vra Truffelsoeker. “Ek sal jou sê hoekom. Omdat gerugte die ronde doen dat ons die konings van ouds geroep het en dat die konings van ouds nie geantwoord het nie. Die laaste woorde wat Trumpels voor sy vertrek gesê het (en dalk is hy al dood), was: ‘As julle die horing moet blaas, moenie dat die manskappe weet hoekom julle dit blaas of waarop julle hoop nie.’ Maar daardie selfde aand het almal geweet.”

“Jy moes jou grys snoet eerder in ’n perdebynes gesteeke het, ratel, as om te kenne te gegee het ek is die een wat alles uitgelap het,” sê Nikabrik. “Trek dit terug, of —”

“Ag, skei uit, al twee van julle,” sê koning Kaspian. “Ek wil weet wat dit is wat Nikabrik aanhou skimp ons moet doen. Maar eers wil ek weet wie daardie twee vreemdelinge is wat hy na ons vergadering gebring het en wat met oop ore en toe monde hier staan.”

“Hulle is my vriende,” sê Nikabrik. “Watter reg het jy om hier te wees, behalwe dat jy ’n vriend van Trumpels en die ratel is? En watter reg het daardie ou kindse grys-aard in die swart gewaad om hier te wees, behalwe dat hy jou vriend is? Hoekom is ek die enigste een wat nie sy vriende mag bring nie?”

“Sy Majesteit is die koning aan wie jy trou gesweer het,” sê Truffelsoeker streng.

“Hofmaniertjies, hofmaniertjies,” sê Nikabrik honend. “Maar in hierdie gat kan ons reguit praat. Jy weet - en hy weet - hierdie Telmareense seun sal binne ’n week koning van nêrens en niemand wees nie, tensy ons hom uit die strik waarin hy sit, help.”

“Dalk,” sê Kornelius, “wil jou nuwe vriende self praat? Julle daar, wie en wat is julle?”

“Agbare meneer doktor,” kom ’n dun kermstemmetjie. “Ekskuus tog, maar ek is net ’n arme ou vrou en baie dankbaar vir sy edele dwergskap se vriendskap. Sy Majesteit, ’n alte mooie seun, hoef nie bang te wees vir ’n ou vrou wat amper dubbel gevou van die rumatiek is en nie twee stokke het om onder haar ketel te sit nie. Ek het ’n bietjie bedrewenheid — natuurlik nie soos u nie, meneer doktor - in klein towerspreuke en goëlery wat ek met graagte teen ons vyand sal gebruik as niemand omgee nie. Want ek haat hulle. O, ja. Niemand kan beter haat as ek nie.”

“Dis alles baie interessant en - hm - bevredigend,” sê doktor Kornelius. “Ek dink ek weet nou wat jy is, me- vrou. Nikabrik, dalk sal jou ander vriend nie omgee om vir ons van homself te vertel nie.”

’n Dowwe, grys stem wat Peter hoendervleis gee, ant- woord, “Ek is honger. Ek is dors. Waar ek byt, hou ek tot ek doodgaan en selfs na my dood moet hulle my laas- te mond vol uit my vyand se liggaam sny en saam met my begrawe. Ek kan ’n honderd jaar vas sonder om te sterf. Ek kan ’n honderd nagte op ys lê sonder om te vries. Ek kan ’n rivier bloed drink sonder om oop te bars. Wys my jul vyand.”

“En dit is in die teenwoordigheid van hierdie twee dat jy jou plan wil onthul?” vra Kaspian.

“Ja,” sê Nikabrik. “En met hul hulp dat ek dit sal uitvoer.”

Vir ’n minuut of twee hoor Trumpels en die twee seuns Kaspian en sy twee vriende sag praat, maar kan nie uitmaak wat hulle sê nie. Dan sê Kaspian hardop, “Wel, Nikabrik, ons sal na jou plan luister.”

Daar is ’n stilte wat so lank duur dat die seuns begin wonder of Nikabrik ooit gaan begin, en toe hy wel begin, is dit in ’n gedempte stem, asof hy self nie juis hou van wat hy sê nie.

“Per slot van rekening,” prewel hy, “weet niemand van ons die waarheid oor die ou dae in Narnia nie. Trumpels glo nie een van die stories nie. Ek was bereid om hulle te beproef. Ons het eers die horing probeer en dit het nie gewerk nie. As daar ooit ’n hoofkoning Peter en ’n ko- ningin Susan en ’n koning Edmund en ’n koningin Lucy was, dan het hulle ons óf nie gehoor nie, óf hulle kan nie kom nie, óf hulle is ons vyand - ”

“Of hulle is op pad,” kap Truffelsoeker teë.

“Jy kan dit aanhou sê tot Miraz ons vir sy honde ge- voer het. Wat ek sê, is ons het een skakel in die ketting van ou legendes beproef en niks daarby gebaat nie. Maar as jou swaard breek, trek jy jou dolk uit. Die stories praat van ander magte buiten die oeroue konings en konin- ginne. Wat as ons *hulle* oproep?”

“Bedoel jy Aslan?” vra Truffelsoeker. “Dis een en die- selfde ding of jy hom of die konings roep. Hulle is sy dienaars. As hy hulle nie wil stuur nie (en ek is seker hy sal), hoekom sal hy self kom?”

“Nee, daar is jy reg,” sê Nikabrik. “Aslan en die konings werk altyd saam. Óf Aslan is dood, óf hy is nie aan ons kant nie. Of anders hou iets sterkers as hy hom terug. En as hy wel kom — hoe weet ons hy gaan ons vriend wees? Volgens oorlewering was hy nog nooit juis ’n groot vriend van die dwerge nie. Nie eens van al die diere nie. Vra die wolwe. En wat meer is, sover ek weet, was hy net een keer in Narnia en hy het nie eens lank gebly nie. Julle

kan vir Aslan maar buite rekening laat. Ek dink aan iemand anders.”

Daar is geen antwoord nie en vir ’n paar oomblikke is dit so stil dat Edmund die ratel se fluitende en snuffelende asemhaling kan hoor.

“Wat bedoel jy?” vra Kaspian.

“Ek bedoel ’n mag wat soveel groter as Aslan s’n is dat dit Narnia vir jare en jare betower het, dis nou in- dien die stories waar is.”

“Wit Heks!” roep drie stemme gelyk uit en Peter lei van die geluide af dat drie mense orent gespring het.

“Ja,” sê Nikabrik baie stadig en baie duidelik, “ek bedoel die heks. Sit nou. Moenie julle soos kinders vir ’n naam doodskrik nie. Ons wil mag he, en ons wil ’n mag hê wat aan ons kant sal wees. So gepraat van mag, sê die ou stories nie die heks het vir Aslan verslaan en vasge- maak en op daardie einste steen daar oorkant, net buite die lig, doodgemaak nie?”

“Maar hulle sê ook hy het weer lewend geword,” sê die ratel skerp.

“Ja, so sê hulle,” antwoord Nikabrik, “maar julle sal merk dat ons bitter min hoor van enigiets wat hy daar- na gedoen het. Hy verdwyn net uit die storie. Hoe ver- laar jy dit as hy dan kamma lewend geword het? Is dit nie baie meer waarskynlik dat hy nié het nie en dat die stories niks meer oor hom sê nie omdat daar niks meer *is* om te sê nie?”

“Hy het die konings en die koninginne ingehuldig,” sê Kaspian.

“’n Koning wat so pas ’n groot oorlog gewen het, kan homself gewoonlik inhuldig sonder dat ’n sirkusleeu hom hoef te help,” sê Nikabrik. Daar is ’n kwaai gegrom, skynbaar van Truffelsoeker af.

“En in elk geval,” gaan Nikabrik voort, “wat het van die konings en hul bewind geword? Hulle het ook verdwyn. Maar dis baie anders met die heks. Hulle sê sy het vir ’n honderd jaar geheers: ’n honderd jaar van winter. Dit is vir jou mag. Dáár’s iets prakties.”

“Maar hemel en aarde!” roep die koning uit. “Is ons nie altyd vertel sy was die ergste vyand van almal nie? Was sy nie ’n tien maal erger tiran as Miraz nie?”

“Dalk,” sê Nikabrik in ’n koue stem. “Dalk *was* sy vir julle mense, as daar enige van julle in daardie tye was. Dalk was sy vir sommige diere. Sy het die bewers uit- gewis. Daar is nie een van hulle in Narnia oor nie. Maar sy het heeltemal goed met ons dwerge oor die weg ge- kom. Ek is ’n dwerg en ek staan agter my eie mense. *Ons* is nie bang vir die heks nie.”

“Maar julle het by ons aangesluit,” sê Truffelsoeker.

“Ja, en wat het dit nie alles vir my mense beteken nie!” snou Nikabrik. “Wie word op al die gevaarlike sendings gestuur? Die dwerge. Wie word afgeskeep wanneer die rantsoene laag is? Die dwerge. Wie — ”

“Leuens! Alles leuens,” sê die ratel.

“So,” sê Nikabrik en sy stem word ’n kreet, “as julle my mense nie kan help nie, sal ek na iemand gaan wat kan.”

“Is dit openlike verraad, dwerg?” vra die koning.

“Steek daardie swaard terug in sy skede, Kaspian,” sê Nikabrik. “Moord tydens ’n raadsvergadering, hm? Is dit jou plan? Moenie gek wees nie. Dink jy ek is bang vir jou? Daar is drie aan my kant en drie aan joune.”

“Kom dan,” grom Truffelsoeker, maar hy word onmiddellik in die rede geval.

“Stop, stop, stop,” sê dokter Kornelius. “Julie is heeltemal te haastig. Die heks is dood. Al die stories is dit eens wat dit betref. Wat bedoel Nikabrik met die heks oproep?”

Die grys en aaklige stem wat nog net een keer tevore gepraat het, sê, “O, is sy?”

En toe begin die skril, kermende stem weer, “O, liewe tyd, die dierbare klein Majesteit moet hom nie oor Wit Dame - dis wat *ons* haar noem — se dood bekommer nie. Die eerbiedwaardige meneer dokter maak net grappies met ’n ou vrou soos ek wanneer hy dit sê. Liewe meneer dokter, geleerde meneer dokter, wie het al ooit van ’n heks gehoor wat doodgaan? ’n Mens kan hulle altyd weer terugroep.”

“Roep haar op,” sê die grys stem. “Ons is almal gereed. Trek die sirkel. Berei die blou vuur voor.”

Bo die ratel se gegrom wat al erger word en Kornelius se skerp, “Wat?” klink Kaspian se stem soos onweer.

“So dis jou plan, Nikabrik! Swart toorkuns en die oproep van ’n vervloekte spook. Ek sien wie jou maters is - ’n ou heks en ’n weerwolf!”

Die volgende paar minute daar ’n deurmekaarspul: die gebrul van ’n dier, die gekletter van staal en die seuns en Trumpels wat instorm. Peter vang ’n glimp van ’n aaklige grys gedaante, halfmens halfwolf, wat ’n seun van omtrent sy ouderdom bespring en Edmund sien ’n ratel en ’n dwerg wat soos bakleiende katte oor die grond rol. Trumpels bevind hom van aangesig tot aangesig met die ou heks. Haar neus en ken steek uit soos neutekrakers, haar vuil grys hare swaai om haar gesig en sy het so pas vir dokter Kornelius aan die keel gegryp. Met een hou van Trumpels se swaard rol haar kop oor die grond. Dan word die lig omgestamp en vir ongeveer sestig sekondes is dit net swaarde, tande, kloue, vuiste en stewels. Toe is dit stil.

“Voel jy goed, Ed?”

“Ek - ek dink so,” hyg Edmund. “Ek het daardie skurk van ’n Nikabrik gekry, maar hy lewe nog.”

“Wurms en waterbottels!” kom ’n woedende stem. “Jy sit op *my*. Staar op. Jy’s soos ’n jong olifant.”

“Jammer, LKV,” sê Edmund. “Is dit beter?”

“Eina! Nee!” bidder Trumpels. “Nou’s jou stewel in my mond. Gee pad.”

“Is koning Kaspian hier iewers?” vra Peter.

“Ek is hier,” sê ’n stem dofweg. “Iets het my gebyt.” Hulle hoor die geluid van iemand wat ’n vuurhoutjie trek. Dis Edmund. Die vlammetjie verlig sy gesig wat bleek en vuil is. Hy strompel ’n bietjie rond op soek na die kers (hulle gebruik nie meer die lamp nie, want die olie is op), sit dit op die tafel en steek dit aan. Toe die vlam helder skyn, skarrel etlike mense orent. Ses gesigte staar in die kerslig na mekaar.

“Dit lyk nie asof ons enige vyande oorhet nie,” sê Peter. “Daar’s die heks, dood.” (Hy draai sy oë vinnig weg.) “En Nikabrik, ook dood. En hierdie ding is seker die weerwolf. Ek het lanklaas een gesien. Kop van ’n wolf en ’n mens se liggaam. Dit beteken hy het van ’n mens na ’n wolf begin verander op die oomblik toe hy doodge- maak is. En jy is seker koning Kaspian?”

“Ja,” sê die ander seun. “Maar ek het nie ’n idee wie jy is nie.”

“Dis die hoofkoning Peter,” sê Trumpels.

“U Majesteit is baie welkom,” sê Kaspian.

“En so is *u Majesteit*,” sê Peter. “Ek het nie gekom om jou plek in te neem nie, maar om jou daarin te vestig.” “U Majesteit,” sê ’n ander stem by Peter se elmboog. Hy draai om en bevind hom van aangesig tot aangesig met die ratel. Peter leun oor, slaan sy arms om die dier en soen die harige kop: dis nie ’n sissierige ding wat hy doen nie, want hy is die hoofkoning.

“Beste van alle ratels,” sê hy. “Jy het nooit aan ons ge- twyfel nie.”

“Moenie my te veel krediet daarvoor gee nie, u Majesteit,” sê Truffelsoeker. “Ek is ’n dier en ons verander nie. Wat meer is, ek is ’n ratel, en ons byt vas.”

“Ek is jammer oor Nikabrik,” sê Kaspian, “hoewel hy my van die eerste oomblik gehaat het. Die lang lyding en al die haat het hom heeltemal suur van binne gemaak. As ons oorwinning gou gekom het, sou hy in vredestryd dalk ’n goeie dwerg gewees het. Ek weet nie wie van ons hom doodgemaak het nie. Daaroor is ek bly.”

“Jy bloei,” sê Peter.

“Ja, ek is gebyt,” sê Kaspian. “Dit was daardie - daar- die wolfding.” Dit neem lank om die wond skoon te maak en te verbind, en toe dit gedoen is, sê Trumpels, “Reg, voor ons enigiets anders doen, moet ons ontbyt eet.” “Maar nie hier nie,” sê Peter.

“Nee,” sê Kaspian en ril. “En ons moet iemand stuur om die liggame te

verwyder.”

“Laat gooi die gespuis in ’n put,” sê Peter. “Maar gee die dwerg vir sy mense om hom op hul manier te begrawe.” Hulle eet uiteindelik ontbyt in ’n ander donker kelder in Aslan se Hoop. Dit is nie juis na hul smaak nie, want Kaspian en Kornelius dink aan wildspasteie en Peter en Edmund aan eiers met hotter en warm koffie, maar wat elkeen kry, is ’n stukkie koue beervleis (uit die seuns se sakke), ’n homp harde kaas, ’n ui en ’n beker water. Die manier waarop hulle dit verslind, sal ’n mens egter laat dink alles is bale smaaklik.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE HIGH KING IN COMMAND

“NOW,” SAID PETER, AS THEY FINISHED their meal, “Aslan and the girls (that’s Queen Susan and Queen Lucy, Caspian) are somewhere close. We don’t know when he will act. In his time, no doubt, not ours. In the meantime he would like us to do what we can on our own. You say, Caspian, we are not strong enough to meet Miraz in pitched battle.”

“I’m afraid not, High King,” said Caspian. He was liking Peter very much, but was rather tongue-tied. It was much stranger for him to meet the great Kings out of the old stories than it was for them to meet him.

“Very well, then,” said Peter, “I’ll send him a challenge to single combat.” No one had thought of this before.

“Please,” said Caspian, “could it not be me? I want to avenge my father.”

“You’re wounded,” said Peter. “And anyway, wouldn’t he just laugh at a challenge from you? I mean, we have seen that you are a king and a warrior but he thinks of you as a kid.”

“But, Sire,” said the Badger, who sat very close to Peter and never took his eyes off him. “Will he accept a challenge even from you? He knows he has the stronger army.”

“Very likely he won’t,” said Peter, “but there’s always the chance. And even if he doesn’t, we shall spend the best part of the day sending heralds to and fro and all that. By then Aslan may have done something. And at least I can inspect the army and strengthen the position. I will send the challenge. In fact I will write it at once. Have you pen and ink, Master Doctor?”

“A scholar is never without them, your Majesty,” answered Doctor Cornelius.

“Very well, I will dictate,” said Peter. And while the Doctor spread out a parchment and opened his ink-horn and sharpened his pen, Peter leant back with half-closed eyes and recalled to his mind the language in which he had written such things long ago in Narnia’s golden age.

“Right,” he said at last. “And now, if you are ready, Doctor?”

Doctor Cornelius dipped his pen and waited. Peter dictated as follows:

“Peter, by the gift of Aslan, by election, by prescription, and by conquest, High King over all Kings in Narnia, Emperor of the Lone Islands and Lord of Cair Paravel, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Lion, to Miraz, Son of Caspian the Eighth, sometime Lord Protector of Narnia and now styling himself King of Narnia, Greeting. Have you got that?”

“Narnia, comma, greeting,” muttered the Doctor. “Yes, Sire.”

“Then begin a new paragraph,” said Peter. “For to prevent the effusion of blood, and for the avoiding all other inconveniences likely to grow from the wars now levied in our realm of Narnia, it is our pleasure to adventure our royal person on behalf of our trusty and well-beloved Caspian in clean wager of battle to prove upon your Lordship’s body that the said Caspian is lawful King under us in Narnia both by our gift and by the laws of the Telmarines, and your Lordship twice guilty of treachery both in withholding the dominion of Narnia from the said Caspian and in the most abhorrible—don’t forget to spell it with an H, Doctor—bloody, and unnatural murder of your kindly lord and brother King Caspian Ninth of that name. Wherefore we most heartily provoke, challenge, and defy your Lordship to the said combat and monomachy, and have sent these letters by the hand of our well beloved and royal brother Edmund, sometime King under us in Narnia, Duke of Lantern Waste and Count of the Western March, Knight of the Noble Order of the Table, to whom we have given full power of determining with your Lordship all the conditions of the said battle. Given at our lodging in Aslan’s How this XII day of the month Greenroof in the first year of Caspian Tenth of Narnia.

“That ought to do,” said Peter, drawing a deep breath. “And now we must send two others with King Edmund. I think the Giant ought to be one.”

“He’s—he’s not very clever, you know,” said Caspian.

“Of course not,” said Peter. “But any giant looks impressive if only he will keep quiet. And it will cheer him up. But who for the other?”

“Upon my word,” said Trumpkin, “if you want someone who can kill with looks, Reepicheep would be the best.”

“He would indeed, from all I hear,” said Peter with a laugh. “If only he wasn’t so small. They wouldn’t even see him till he was close!”

“Send Glenstorm, Sire,” said Trufflehunter. “No one ever laughed at a Centaur.”

An hour later two great lords in the army of Miraz, the Lord Glozelle and the Lord Sopespian, strolling along their lines and picking their teeth after breakfast, looked up and saw coming down to them from the wood the Centaur and Giant Wimbleweather, whom they had seen before in battle, and between them a figure they could not recognize. Nor indeed would the other boys at Edmund’s school have recognized him if they could have seen him at that moment. For Aslan had breathed on him at their meeting and a kind of greatness hung about him.

“What’s to do?” said the Lord Glozelle. “An attack?”



"A parley, rather," said Sopespian. "See, they carry green branches. They are coming to surrender most likely."

"He that is walking between the Centaur and the Giant has no look of surrender in his face," said Glozelle. "Who can he be? It is not the boy Caspian."

"No indeed," said Sopespian. "This is a fell warrior, I warrant you, wherever the rebels have got him from. He is (in your Lordship's private ear) a kinglier man than ever Miraz was. And what mail he wears! None of our smiths can make the like."

"I'll wager my dappled Pomely he brings a challenge, not a surrender," said Glozelle.

"How then?" said Sopespian. "We hold the enemy in our fist here. Miraz would never be so hair-brained as to throw away his advantage on a combat."

"He might be brought to it," said Glozelle in a much lower voice.

"Softly," said Sopespian. "Step a little aside here out of earshot of those sentries. Now. Have I taken your Lordship's meaning aright?"

"If the King undertook wager of battle," whispered Glozelle, "why, either he would kill or be killed."

"So," said Sopespian, nodding his head.

"And if he killed we should have won this war."

"Certainly. And if not?"

"Why, if not, we should be as able to win it without the King's grace as with him. For I need not tell your Lordship that Miraz is no very great captain. And after that, we should be both victorious and kingless."

"And it is your meaning, my Lord, that you and I could hold this land quite as conveniently without a King as with one?"

Glozelle's face grew ugly. "Not forgetting," said he, "that it was we who first put him on the throne. And in all the years that he has enjoyed it, what fruits have come our way? What gratitude has he shown us?"

"Say no more," answered Sopespian. "But look—here comes one to fetch us to the King's tent."

When they reached Miraz's tent they saw Edmund and his two companions seated outside it and being entertained with cakes and wine, having already delivered the challenge, and withdrawn while the

King was considering it. When they saw them thus at close quarters the two Telmarine lords thought all three of them very alarming.

Inside, they found Miraz, unarmed and finishing his breakfast. His face was flushed and there was a scowl on his brow.

"There!" he growled, flinging the parchment across the table to them. "See what a pack of nursery tales our jackanapes of a nephew has sent us."

"By your leave, Sire," said Glozelle. "If the young warrior whom we have just seen outside is the King Edmund mentioned in the writing, then I would not call him a nursery tale but a very dangerous knight."

"King Edmund, pah!" said Miraz. "Does your Lordship believe those old wives' fables about Peter and Edmund and the rest?"

"I believe my eyes, your Majesty," said Glozelle.

"Well, this is to no purpose," said Miraz, "but as touching the challenge, I suppose there is only one opinion between us?"

"I suppose so, indeed, Sire," said Glozelle.

"And what is that?" asked the King.

"Most infallibly to refuse it," said Glozelle. "For though I have never been called a coward, I must plainly say that to meet that young man in battle is more than my heart would serve me for. And if (as is likely) his brother, the High King, is more dangerous than he—why, on your life, my Lord King, have nothing to do with him."

"Plague on you!" cried Miraz. "It was not that sort of counsel I wanted. Do you think I am asking you if I should be afraid to meet this Peter (if there is such a man)? Do you think I fear him? I wanted your counsel on the policy of the matter; whether we, having the advantage, should hazard it on a wager of battle."

"To which I can only answer, your Majesty," said Glozelle, "that for all reasons the challenge should be refused. There is death in the strange knight's face."

"There you are again!" said Miraz, now thoroughly angry. "Are you trying to make it appear that I am as great a coward as your Lordship?"

"Your Majesty may say your pleasure," said Glozelle sulkily.

"You talk like an old woman, Glozelle," said the King. "What say you, my Lord Sopespian?"

"Do not touch it, Sire," was the reply. "And what your Majesty says of the policy of the thing comes in very happily. It gives your Majesty excellent grounds for a refusal without any cause for questioning your Majesty's honor or courage."

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed Miraz, jumping to his feet. "Are *you* also bewitched today? Do you think I am *looking* for grounds to refuse it? You might as well call me coward to my face."

The conversation was going exactly as the two lords wished, so they said nothing.

"I see what it is," said Miraz, after staring at them as if his eyes would start out of his head, "you are as lily-livered as hares yourselves and have the effrontery to imagine my heart after the likeness of yours! Grounds for a refusal, indeed! Excuses for not fighting! Are you soldiers? Are you Telmarines? Are you men? And if I do refuse it (as all good reasons of captaincy and martial policy urge me to do) you will think, and teach others to think, I was afraid. Is it not so?"

"No man of your Majesty's age," said Glozelle, "would be called coward by any wise soldier for refusing the combat with a great warrior in the flower of his youth."

"So I'm to be a dotard with one foot in the grave, as well as a dastard," roared Miraz. "I'll tell you what it is, my Lords. With your womanish counsels (ever shying from the true point, which is one of policy) you have done the very opposite of your intent. I had meant to refuse it. But I'll accept it. Do you hear, accept it! I'll not be shamed because some witchcraft or treason has frozen both your bloods."

"We beseech your Majesty—" said Glozelle, but Miraz had flung out of the tent and they could hear him bawling out his acceptance to Edmund.

The two lords looked at one another and chuckled quietly.

"I knew he'd do it if he were properly chafed," said Glozelle. "But I'll not forget he called me coward. It shall be paid for."

There was a great stirring at Aslan's How when the news came back and was communicated to the various creatures. Edmund, with one of Miraz's captains, had already marked out the place for the combat, and ropes and stakes had been put round it. Two Telmarines were to stand at two of the corners, and one in the middle of one side, as marshals of the lists. Three marshals for the other two corners and the other side were to be furnished by the High King. Peter was just explaining to Caspian that he could not be one, because his right to the throne was what they were fighting about, when suddenly a thick, sleepy voice said, "Your Majesty, please." Peter turned and there stood the eldest of the Bulgy Bears. "If you please, your Majesty," he said, "I'm a bear, I am."

"To be sure, so you are, and a good bear too, I don't doubt," said Peter.

"Yes," said the Bear. "But it was always a right of the bears to supply one marshal of the lists."

"Don't let him," whispered Trumpkin to Peter. "He's a good creature, but he'll shame us all. He'll go to sleep and he *will* suck his paws. In front of the enemy too."

"I can't help that," said Peter. "Because he's quite right. The Bears had that privilege. I can't imagine how it has been remembered all these years, when so many other things have been forgotten."

"Please, your Majesty," said the Bear.

"It is your right," said Peter. "And you shall be one of the marshals. But you *must* remember not to suck your paws."

"Of course not," said the Bear in a very shocked voice.

"Why, you're doing it this minute!" bellowed Trumpkin.



The Bear whipped his paw out of his mouth and pretended he hadn't heard.

"Sire!" came a shrill voice from near the ground.

"Ah—Reepicheep!" said Peter after looking up and down and round as people usually did when addressed by the Mouse.

"Sire," said Reepicheep. "My life is ever at your command, but my honor is my own. Sire, I have among my people the only trumpeter in your Majesty's army. I had thought, perhaps, we might have been sent with the challenge. Sire, my people are grieved. Perhaps if it were your pleasure that I should be a marshal of the lists, it would content them."

A noise not unlike thunder broke out from somewhere overhead at this point, as Giant Wimbleweather burst into one of those not very intelligent laughs to which the nicer sorts of Giant are so liable. He checked himself at once and looked as grave as a turnip by the time Reepicheep discovered where the noise came from.

"I am afraid it would not do," said Peter very gravely. "Some humans are afraid of mice—"

"I had observed it, Sire," said Reepicheep.

"And it would not be quite fair to Miraz," Peter continued, "to have in sight anything that might abate the edge of his courage."

"Your Majesty is the mirror of honor," said the Mouse with one of his admirable bows. "And on this matter we have but a single mind.... I thought I heard someone laughing just now. If anyone present wishes to make me the subject of his wit, I am very much at his service—with my sword—whenever he has leisure."



An awful silence followed this remark, which was broken by Peter saying, "Giant Wimbleweather and the Bear and the Centaur

Glenstorm shall be our marshals. The combat will be at two hours after noon. Dinner at noon precisely."

"I say," said Edmund as they walked away, "I suppose it *is* all right. I mean, I suppose you can beat him?"

"That's what I'm fighting him to find out," said Peter.

HOOFSTUK 13

Die hoofkoning in bevel



"Luister," sê Peter toe hulle klaar geëet het, "Aslan en die meisies (dis nou koningin Susan en koningin Lucy, Kaspian) is hier naby iewers. Ons weet nie wanneer hy iets gaan doen nie. Ongetwyfeld op sy eie tyd, nie ons s'n nie. Intussen sal hy wil hê ons moet ons bes doen. Kaspian, jy sê ons is nie sterk genoeg om vir Miraz in 'n groot veldslag te verslaan nie?"

"Ek is bevrees nie, Hoofkoning," sê Kaspian. Hy hou baie van Peter, maar is effens swaar van tong. Dit is baie vreemder vir hom om die groot hoofkoning uit die ou stories te ontmoet as wat dit vir hulle is om hom te ontmoet.

"Nou goed dan," sê Peter. "Ek sal hom tot 'n twee-geveg uitdaag." Niemand het nog hieraan gedink nie.

"Asseblief," sê Kaspian, "kan ek dit doen? Ek moet my vader wreek."

"Jy is gewond," sê Peter. "En in elk geval, sal hy nie 'n uitdaging van jou net aflag nie? Ek bedoel, ons het gesien jy is 'n koning en 'n soldaat, maar hy beskou jou as 'n blote kind."

"Maar Majesteit," sê die ratel wat naby Peter sit en nie sy oë van hom kan afhou nie. "Sal hy 'n uitdaging selfs van jou aanvaar? Hy weet hy het 'n sterker leer." "Hy sal heel waarskynlik nie," sê Peter, "maar daar is altyd 'n kans. En selfs al aanvaar hy nie die uitnodiging nie, sal ons die grootste deel van die dag besig wees om

boodskappe oor en weer te stuur. Teen daardie tyd het Aslan dalk al iets gedoen. En intussen kan ek ten minste die leer inspekteer en ons posisie versterk. Ek sal die uit-

daging stuur. Het jy pen en ink, meneer dokter?"

"'n Geleerde is nooit daarsonder nie, u Majesteit," antwoord dokter Kornelius.

“Goed dan, ek sal dikteer,” sê Peter. En terwyl die doktor ’n perkament oopsprei en sy inkhoring oopmaak en sy pen skerp maak, leun Peter met halfgeslote oë terug en probeer die ou taal onthou waarin hy sulke dinge geskryf het, lank gelede tydens Narnia se Goue Tydperk.

“Goed,” sê hy uiteindelik. “Is jy gereed, doktor?” Doktor Kornelius druk sy pen in ink en wag. Peter dikteer soos volg:

“Peter, deur die gawe van Aslan, deur vrye verkiesing, deur gewoontereg en deur verowering, hoofkoning oor al die konings van Narnia, Heerser van die Eilande van Verlatenheid en Meester van Kair Paravel, Ridder van die mees Edele Orde van die Eeeu, aan Miraz, Seun van Kaspian die Agste, voormalige beskermheer van Narnia en nou selfaangevuese koning van Narnia, wees gegroet. Het jy dit?”

“Narnia, komma, gegroetprewel die doktor. “Ja, Majesteit.”

“Begin dan met ’n nuwe paragraaf,” sê Peter. *“Ten einde die verspilling van bloed te voorkom en ander ongerief voortvloeiend uit hierdie stryd in die koninkryk van Narnia te verhoed, behaag dit ons om namens ons getroue en geliefde Kaspian ons koninklike persoon in ’n skoon stryd tot die dood te waag om te bewys dat genoemde Kaspian die wettige koning van Narnia is, soos deur ons bewillig en ook onder die Telmareense wet, en dat u Lordskap dubbel skuldig aan ver- raad is, sowel in die weerhouding van die heerskappy oor*

Narnia van genoemde Kaspian, as in die mees verfoeilike, bloeddorstige en onnatuurlike moord op u geliefde heer en broer, koning Kaspian die Negende. Derhalwe daag ons u Lordskap met groot genoeë uit tot genoemde tweegeveg en stuur hierdie briewe met die hand van ons geliefde en konink- like broer Edmund, eertydse koning onder ons van Narnia, Hertog van die Lanternwoestyn en Graaf van die Westelike Grens, Ridder van die Edele Orde van die Tafel, aan wie ons ’n volmag gegee het om al die voorwaardes van genoemde tweestryd met u Lordskap te bepaal. Gegee by ons vesting in Aslan se Hoop op hierdie XII dag van die maand Groendak in die eerste jaar van Kaspian die Tiende van Narnia.”

“Dit behoort genoeg te wees,” sê Peter en trek sy asem diep in. “En nou moet ons twee metgeselle saam met koning Edmund stuur. Ek dink die reus moet een van hulle wees.”

“Hy - hy’s nie baie slim nie,” sê Kaspian.

“Natuurlik nie,” sê Peter. “Maar enige reus lyk indruk- wekkend solank hy net sy mond hou. En dit sal hom opgeruimd laat voel. Maar wie sal die ander een wees?” “By my kool!” sê Trumpels. “As julle iemand met oë soos dolke soek, is Riepetjiep net die man vir julle.”

“Hy is inderdaad volgens wat ek gehoor het,” sê Peter met ’n laggie. “As hy net nie so klein was nie. Hulle sal hom eers sien wanneer hy op hulle is!”

“Stuur vir Glenstorm, Majesteit,” sê Truffelsoeker. “Niemand lag ooit vir ’n sentour nie.”

’n Uur of twee later stap twee groot here in Miraz se leër, lord Glozél en lord Sopespian, na ontbyt langs hul linies terwyl hulle hul tande stook. Hulle kyk op en sien hoe ’n sentour en die reus Wimpelweer wat hulle vroeër in die stryd gesien het, uit die bosse aankom met ’n fi-guur wat hulle nie herken nie tussen hulle. As die ander seuns by Edmund se skool hom op hierdie oomblik sou sien, sou hulle hom ook vir ’n oomblik nie herken het nie. Want Aslan het tydens hul ontmoeting oor hom geblaas en ’n soort grootsheid hang oor hom.

“Wat is dit?” vra die heer Glozél. “’n Aanval?”

“Onderhandelings, sou ek sê,” antwoord Sopespian. “Kyk, hulle dra groen takke. Kom seker oorgee.”

“Hy wat daar tussen die sentour en die reus stap, het nie ’n trek van oorgawe op sy gesig nie,” sê Glozél. “Wie kan dit wees? Dis nie die seun Kaspian nie.”

“Nee, inderdaad nie,” sê Sopespian. “Dis ’n geoefende vegter, dis verseker, waar die rebelle ook al aan hom gekom het. Hy is (en dis slegs vir u Lordskap se oor) meer koninklik as wat Miraz ooit sal wees. En kyk die malie- konder! Nie een van ons smede kan so iets maak nie.” “Ek wed jou my skimmel Pomelie hy bring ’n uit-daging en nie ’n oorgawe nie,” sê Glozél.

“Hoe nou?” sê Sopespian. “Ons het die vyand in die holte van ons hand. Miraz sal nooit so mal wees om sy voordeel ter wille van ’n tweeveg te verbeur nie.”

“Hy kan daartoe gedwing word,” sê Glozél in ’n baie laer stem.

“Stil,” sê Sopespian. “Kom buite hoorafstand van die wagte. So ja. Het ek u Lordskap reg verstaan?”

“As die koning tot ’n tweeveg uitgedaag word,” fluister Glozél, “kan hy óf doodmaak, óf doodgemaak word.”

“Ja,” sê Sopespian en knik sy kop.

“En indien hy doodmaak, het ons hierdie oorlog ge-wen.”

“Sekerlik. En indien nie?”

“Indien nie, sal ons nog steeds in staat wees om te wen - sonder die koning se guns óf daarmee. Want ek hoef nie vir u Lordskap te sê dat Miraz nie ’n groot kap-tein is nie. En daarna sal ons sowel seëvierend as koningloos wees.”

“So dit is wat jy bedoel, my heer, dat ek en jy net so maklik in besit van

hierdie land kan bly sonder die koning as mēt hom?"

Glozél se gesig word lelik. "Moenie vergeet nie," sê hy, "dit is ons wat hom in die eerste plek op die troon geplaas het. En in al die jare dat hy dit geniet het, waiter vrugte het ons gepluk? Hoeveel dankbaarheid het hy aan ons getoon?"

"Genoeg!" antwoord Sopespian. "Maar kyk - hier kom iemand om ons na die koning se tent te ontbied."

Toe hulle by Miraz se tent kom, sien hulle Edmund en sy twee metgeselle het reeds die uitdaging oorhandig en word buite op koek en wyn trakteer terwyl die koning dit oorweeg. Toe die twee Telmareense lords hulle van naby sien, dink hulle al drie lyk uiters vreesaanjaend.

Binne-in die tent is Miraz ongewapen besig om sy ontbyt klaar te eet. Sy gesig is rooi en daar is 'n frons op sy voorkop.

"Lees!" blaf hy en gooi die perkament oor die tafel na hulle toe. "Kyk watter boel feëverhale het daardie klein bog van 'n nefie van my vir ons gestuur."

"As u my sal verskoon, Majesteit," sê Glozél. "Indien die jong soldaat wat ons so pas hier buite gesien het, wel die koning Edmund is wat in die skrywe genoem word, sal ek hom nie 'n feëverhaal noem nie, maar 'n baie gevaarlike ridder."

"Koning Edmund, ba!" sê Miraz. "Glo u Lordskap tog nie daardie ouvroutories oor Peter en Edmund en die res nie?"

"Ek glo my oë, u Majesteit," sê Glozél.

"Wel, dis nie ter sake nie," sê Miraz, "maar wat die uitdaging betref, sou ek reken dat ons dit eens is?"

"Ek sou so reken, u Majesteit," sê Glozél.

"En wat beteken dit miskien?" vra die koning.

"Dat u baie beslis moet weier," sê Glozél. "Want hoe- wel ek nog nooit 'n lafaard genoem is nie, wil ek dit duidelik stel dat om teen daardie jong man te moet veg meer is as waarvoor ek sal kans sien. En indien (soos dit na alle waarskynlikheid die geval is) sy broer, die hoof- koning, selfs gedugter as hy is - nee, as u u lewe liefhet, my Heer die Koning, moet u niks met hom te doen hê nie."

"Na die hoenders met jou!" skree Miraz. "Dis nie die soort raad wat ek soek nie. Dink jy ek wil weet of ek vir daardie Peter (as daar so iemand is) moet bang wees? Dink jy ek vrees hom? Ek wil jou aanbeveling hê raken- de die beleid van die saak; of ons, nou dat ons die hef in die hand het, alles op 'n tweeveg moet waag."

"Waarop ek net kan antwoord, u Majesteit," sê Glozél, "dat die uitdaging

om alle redes geweier moet word. Ek sien die dood in die vreemde ridder se gesig.”

“Daar doen jy dit al weer!” sê Miraz wat nou siedend woedend is. “Probeer jy voorgee ek is net so ’n groot papbroek soos u Lordskap?”

“U Majesteit mag sê wat u behaag,” sê Glozél stuuers.

“Jy praat soos ’n ou vrou, Glozél,” sê die koning. “Wat sê jy, my heer Sopespian?”

“Moet dit nie eens oorweeg nie, Majesteit,” kom die antwoord. “En wat u Majesteit daar oor beleid sê, kom baie mooi te pas. Dit sal u Majesteit uitstekende gronde gee om te weier sonder dat u Majesteit se moed in twyfel getrek kan word.”

“Liewe hemel!” roep Miraz uit en spring orent. “Is jy ook vandag begogel? Dink julle ek *soek* gronde om dit te weier? Julle kan my net sowel in ray gesig ’n lafaard noem.”

Die gesprek verloop presies soos die twee lords dit beplan het, dus sê hulle niks.

“Ek sien wat hier aangaan,” sê Miraz en staar na hulle met oë wat uit sy kop peul, “julle is so bang soos hase en is onbeskaamd genoeg om te dink ek is soos julle. Gronde om te weier, inderdaad! Redes om nie te veg nie! Is julle soldate? Is julle Telmarene? Is julle manne? En ge- stel ek weier dit (op grond van uitstekende redes soos goeie kapteinskap en doeltreffende krygskunde), dan sal julle dink, en ander leer om te dink, ek was bang. Is dit nie so nie?”

“Geen man van u Majesteit se jare,” sê Glozél, “kan deur enige verstandige soldaat ’n lafaard genoem word indien u sou weier om teen ’n gedugte soldaat in die fleur van sy lewe te veg nie.”

“Dus is ek ’n kindse ou grysaard met een been in die graf, sowel as ’n lafaard,” brul Miraz. “Ek sal vir julle sê wat hier aan die gang is, my lords. Met jul verwyfde manier van raad gee (al óm die punt, wat hier een van beleid is), het julle presies die teenoorgestelde reggekry. Ek was van plan om te weier. Maar ek sal die uitdaging aanvaar. Hoor julle my? Ek aanvaar dit. Ek gaan nie beskaam staan omdat hekserij of verraad julle twee se bloed verys het nie.”

“Ons smee u Majesteit - ” sê Glozél, maar Miraz storm by die tent uit en hulle hoor hoe hy sy aanvaar- ding aan Edmund uitbulder.

Die twee lords kyk na mekaar en lag stilweg.

“Ek het geweet hy sal dit doen as hy behoorlik brie- send is,” sê Glozél. “Maar ek sal nie vergeet dat hy my ’n lafaard genoem het nie. Daarvoor sal hy boet.”

Daar is ’n groot beroering by Aslan se Hoop toe die nuus terugkom en aan

die verskillende wesens oorgedra word. Edmund en een van Miraz se kapteins het reeds die plek vir die geveg uitgemeet en toe en pale is rond- om gespan. Twee Telmarene staan by twee van die hoeke en een in die middel van die een kant om as maarskalke in die kryt op te tree. Drie maarskalke vir die ander twee hoeke en die ander kant sal deur die hoofkoning verskaf word. Peter is juis besig om vir Kaspian te verduidelik dat hy nie een kan wees nie omdat dit sy reg tot die troon is waaroor hulle gaan veg, toe 'n dik, slaperige stem skielik sê, “U Majesteit, asseblief.” Peter draai om en daar staan die oudste van die boepensbere. “As dit u Majesteit sal behaag,” sê hy, “ek is 'n beer, dis wat.”

“Dis heeltemal reg, jy is, en 'n goeie beer op die koop toe,” sê Peter.

“Ja,” sê die beer. “En dit was nog altyd die bere se reg om een maarskalk vir die kryt te voorsien.”

“Moenie dat hy dit doen nie,” fluister Trumpels vir Peter. “Hy is 'n goeie dier, maar hy sal ons in die skande steek. Hy sal aan die slaap raak en hy *gaan* aan sy pote suig. Voor die vyand ook nog.” “Ek kan nie anders nie,” sê Peter, “want hy is heeltemal reg. Die here het daardie voorreg. Ek kan nie dink hoe hy dit al hierdie jare onthou het, terwyl soveel ander goed verlore gegaan het nie.”

“Asseblief, u Majesteit,” sê die beer.

“Dit is jul reg,” sê Peter. “En jy sal een van die maarskalke wees. Maar jy *moet* onthou om nie jou pote te suig nie.”

“Natuurlik nie,” sê die beer in 'n baie geskokte stem. “Maar daar doen jy dit dan juis nou!” bulder Trumpels.

Die beer ruk sy poot uit sy mond en maak asof hy nie gehoor het nie. “Majesteit!” kom 'n stem van naby die grond.

“A - Riepetjiep!” sê Peter nadat hy op en af en om hom gekyk het soos mense gewoonlik maak wanneer die muis met hulle praat.

“Majesteit,” sê Riepetjiep. “My lewe is altyd tot u beskikking, maar my eer is my eie. Majesteit, een van my mense is die enigste trom- petblaser in u Majesteit se leër. Ek het gedink ons sou die uitdaging vergesel. Majesteit, my mense is gekrenk. As dit u Majesteit behaag om my as maarskalk in die kryt aan te stel, sal dit hulle dalk tevrede stel.”

Op dié oomblik bars 'n geluid baie soos onweer iewers bo hul koppe los toe die reus Wimbelweer uitbars in een van daardie nie baie intelligente lagbuie waartoe die vriendeliker soort reuse geneig is. Hy betuel hom net betyds en lyk so ernstig soos 'n raap teen die tyd dat Riepetjiep agterkom waar die geluid vandaan gekom het.

“Ek is bevrees dit sal nie deug nie,” sê Peter plegtig. “Party mense is bang

vir muiſe — ”

“Ek het dit al agtergekom, Majesteit,” sê Riepetjiep. “En dit sal onbillik teenoor Miraz wees,” gaan Peter voort, “as daar iets wat sy moed kan aantast binne sig is.” “U Majesteit is die weerspieëling van eer,” sê die muis met een van sy bewonderenswaardige buigings. “En wat hierdie aangeleentheid betref, stem ons saam . . . ek het my verbeel ek het iemand netnou hoor lag. As enige- mand hier teenwoordig met my die spot wil dryf, is ek tot sy diens - met my swaard — wanneer dit hom behaag.”

’n Vreeslike stilte volg op hierdie opmerking en word eers verbreek toe Peter sê, “Die reus Wimbelweer en die beer en die sentour Glenstorm sal ons maarskalke wees. Die tweegeveg vind vanmiddag om twee-uur plaas. Mid-dagete is presies om twaalfuur.”

“Hoor hier,” sê Edmund toe hulle wegstap, “ek skat dis seker alles in die haak. Ek bedoel, jy kan hom darem seker klop, of hoe?”

“Dis hoekom ek teen hom gaan veg: om dit uit te vind,” sê Peter.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

HOW ALL WERE VERY BUSY

A LITTLE BEFORE TWO O'CLOCK TRUMPKIN and the Badger sat with the rest of the creatures at the wood's edge looking across at the gleaming line of Miraz's army which was about two arrow-shots away. In between, a square space of level grass had been staked for the combat. At the two far corners stood Glozelle and Sopespian with drawn swords. At the near corners were Giant Wimbleweather and the Bulgy Bear, who in spite of all their warnings was sucking his paws and looking, to tell the truth, uncommonly silly. To make up for this, Glenstorm on the right of the lists, stockstill except when he stamped a hind hoof occasionally on the turf, looked much more imposing than the Telmarine baron who faced him on the left. Peter had just shaken hands with Edmund and the Doctor, and was now walking down to the combat. It was like the moment before the pistol goes at an important race, but very much worse.

"I wish Aslan had turned up before it came to this," said Trumpinkin.

"So do I," said Trufflehunter. "But look behind you."

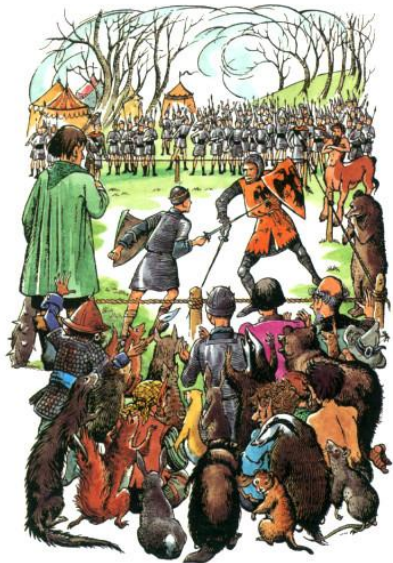
"Crows and crockery!" muttered the Dwarf as soon as he had done so. "What are they? Huge people—beautiful people—like gods and goddesses and giants. Hundreds and thousands of them, closing in behind us. What are they?"

"It's the Dryads and Hamadryads and Silvans," said Trufflehunter. "Aslan has waked them."

"Humph!" said the Dwarf. "That'll be very useful if the enemy try any treachery. But it won't help the High King very much if Miraz proves handier with his sword."

The Badger said nothing, for now Peter and Miraz were entering the lists from opposite ends, both on foot, both in chain shirts, with helmets and shields. They advanced till they were close together. Both bowed and seemed to speak, but it was impossible to hear what they said. Next moment the two swords flashed in the sunlight. For a second the clash could be heard but it was immediately drowned because both armies began shouting like crowds at a football match.

"Well done, Peter, oh, well done!" shouted Edmund as he saw Miraz reel back a whole pace and a half. "Follow it up, quick!" And Peter did, and for a few seconds it looked as if the fight might be won. But then Miraz pulled himself together—began to make real use of his height and weight. "Miraz! Miraz! The King! the King!" came the roar of the Telmarines. Caspian and Edmund grew white with sickening anxiety.



“Peter is taking some dreadful knocks,” said Edmund.

“Hullo!” said Caspian. “What’s happening now?”

“Both falling apart,” said Edmund. “A bit blown, I expect. Watch. Ah, now they’re beginning again, more scientifically this time. Circling round and round, feeling each other’s defenses.”

“I’m afraid this Miraz knows his work,” muttered the Doctor. But hardly had he said this when there was such a clapping and baying and throwing up of hoods among the Old Narnians that it was nearly deafening.

“What was it? What was it?” asked the Doctor. “My old eyes missed it.”

“The High King has pricked him in the armpit,” said Caspian, still clapping. “Just where the arm-hole of the hauberk let the point through. First blood.”

“It’s looking ugly again now, though,” said Edmund. “Peter’s not using his shield properly. He must be hurt in the left arm.”

It was only too true. Everyone could see that Peter’s shield hung limp. The shouting of the Telmarines redoubled.

“You’ve seen more battles than I,” said Caspian. “Is there any chance now?”

“Precious little,” said Edmund. “I suppose he might *just* do it. With luck.”

“Oh, why did we let it happen at all?” said Caspian.

Suddenly all the shouting on both sides died down. Edmund was puzzled for a moment. Then he said, “Oh, I see. They’ve both agreed to a rest. Come on, Doctor. You and I may be able to do something for the High King.” They ran down to the lists and Peter came outside the

ropes to meet them, his face red and sweaty, his chest heaving.

"Is your left arm wounded?" asked Edmund.

"It's not exactly a wound," Peter said. "I got the full weight of his shoulder on my shield—like a load of bricks—and the rim of the shield drove into my wrist. I don't think it's broken, but it might be a sprain. If you could tie it up very tight I think I could manage."

While they were doing this, Edmund asked anxiously, "What do you think of him, Peter?"

"Tough," said Peter. "Very tough. I have a chance if I can keep him on the hop till his weight and short wind come against him—in this hot sun too. To tell the truth, I haven't much chance else. Give my love to—to everyone at home, Ed, if he gets me. Here he comes into the lists again. So long, old chap. Good-bye, Doctor. And I say, Ed, say something specially nice to Trumpkin. He's been a brick."

Edmund couldn't speak. He walked back with the Doctor to his own lines with a sick feeling in his stomach.

But the new bout went well. Peter now seemed to be able to make some use of his shield, and he certainly made good use of his feet. He was almost playing Tig with Miraz now, keeping out of range, shifting his ground, making the enemy work.

"Coward!" booed the Telmarines. "Why don't you stand up to him? Don't you like it, eh? Thought you'd come to fight, not dance. Yah!"

"Oh, I do hope he won't listen to them," said Caspian.

"Not he," said Edmund. "You don't know him—Oh!"—for Miraz had got in a blow at last, on Peter's helmet. Peter staggered, slipped sideways, and fell on one knee. The roar of the Telmarines rose like the noise of the sea. "Now, Miraz," they yelled. "Now. Quick! Quick! Kill him." But indeed there was no need to egg the usurper on. He was on top of Peter already. Edmund bit his lips till the blood came, as the sword flashed down on Peter. It looked as if it would slash off his head. Thank heavens! it had glanced down his right shoulder. The Dwarf-brought mail was sound and did not break.

"Great Scott!" cried Edmund. "He's up again. Peter, go it, Peter."

"I couldn't see what happened," said the Doctor. "How did he do it?"

"Grabbed Miraz's arm as it came down," said Trumpkin, dancing with delight. "There's a man for you! Uses his enemy's arm as a ladder. The High King! The High King! Up, Old Narnia!"

"Look," said Trufflehunter. "Miraz is angry. It is good."

They were certainly at it hammer and tongs now: such a flurry of blows that it seemed impossible for either not to be killed. As the excitement grew, the shouting almost died away. The spectators were holding their breath. It was most horrible and most magnificent.

A great shout arose from the Old Narnians. Miraz was down—not struck by Peter, but face downward, having tripped on a tussock. Peter

stepped back, waiting for him to rise.

“Oh bother, bother, bother,” said Edmund to himself. “Need he be as gentlemanly as that? I suppose he must. Comes of being a Knight *and* a High King. I suppose it is what Aslan would like. But that brute will be up again in a minute and then—”

But “that brute” never rose. The Lords Glozelle and Sopespian had their own plans ready. As soon as they saw their King down they leaped into the lists crying, “Treachery! Treachery! The Narnian traitor has stabbed him in the back while he lay helpless. To arms! To arms, Telmar!”

Peter hardly understood what was happening. He saw two big men running toward him with drawn swords. Then the third Telmarine had leaped over the ropes on his left. “To arms, Narnia. Treachery!” Peter shouted. If all three had set upon him at once he would never have spoken again. But Glozelle stopped to stab his own King dead where he lay: “That’s for your insult, this morning,” he whispered as the blade went home. Peter swung to face Sopespian, slashed his legs from under him and, with the back-cut of the same stroke, walloped off his head. Edmund was now at his side crying, “Narnia! Narnia! The Lion!” The whole Telmarine army was rushing toward them. But now the Giant was stamping forward, stooping low and swinging his club. The Centaurs charged. *Twang, twang* behind and *hiss, hiss* overhead came the archery of Dwarfs. Trumpkin was fighting at his left. Full battle was joined.

“Come back, Reepicheep, you little ass!” shouted Peter. “You’ll only be killed. This is no place for mice.” But the ridiculous little creatures were dancing in and out among the feet of both armies, jabbing with their swords. Many a Telmarine warrior that day felt his foot suddenly pierced as if by a dozen skewers, hopped on one leg cursing the pain, and fell as often as not. If he fell, the mice finished him off; if he did not, someone else did.

But almost before the Old Narnians were really warmed to their work they found the enemy giving way. Tough-looking warriors turned white, gazed in terror not on the Old Narnians but on something behind them, and then flung down their weapons, shrieking, “The Wood! The Wood! The end of the world!”

But soon neither their cries nor the sound of weapons could be heard any more, for both were drowned in the ocean-like roar of the Awakened Trees as they plunged through the ranks of Peter’s army, and then on, in pursuit of the Telmarines. Have you ever stood at the edge of a great wood on a high ridge when a wild southwester broke over it in full fury on an autumn evening? Imagine that sound. And then imagine that the wood, instead of being fixed to one place, was rushing *at* you; and was no longer trees but huge people; yet still like trees

because their long arms waved like branches and their heads tossed and leaves fell round them in showers. It was like that for the Telmarines. It was a little alarming even for the Narnians. In a few minutes all Miraz's followers were running down to the Great River in the hope of crossing the bridge to the town of Beruna and there defending themselves behind ramparts and closed gates.

They reached the river, but there was no bridge. It had disappeared since yesterday. Then utter panic and horror fell upon them and they all surrendered.

But what had happened to the bridge?

Early that morning, after a few hours' sleep, the girls had waked, to see Aslan standing over them and to hear his voice saying, "We will make holiday." They rubbed their eyes and looked round them. The trees had all gone but could still be seen moving away toward Aslan's How in a dark mass. Bacchus and the Maenads—his fierce, madcap girls—and Silenus were still with them. Lucy, fully rested, jumped up. Everyone was awake, everyone was laughing, flutes were playing, cymbals clashing. Animals, not Talking Animals, were crowding in upon them from every direction.

"What is it, Aslan?" said Lucy, her eyes dancing and her feet wanting to dance.

"Come, children," said he. "Ride on my back again today."

"Oh, lovely!" cried Lucy, and both girls climbed onto the warm golden back as they had done no one knew how many years before. Then the whole party moved off—Aslan leading, Bacchus and his Maenads leaping, rushing, and turning somersaults, the beasts frisking round them, and Silenus and his donkey bringing up the rear.

They turned a little to the right, raced down a steep hill, and found the long Bridge of Beruna in front of them. Before they had begun to cross it, however, up out of the water came a great wet, bearded head, larger than a man's, crowned with rushes. It looked at Aslan and out of its mouth a deep voice came.

"Hail, Lord," it said. "Loose my chains."

"Who on earth is *that*?" whispered Susan.

"I think it's the river-god, but hush," said Lucy.

"Bacchus," said Aslan. "Deliver him from his chains."

"That means the bridge, I expect," thought Lucy. And so it did. Bacchus and his people splashed forward into the shallow water, and a minute later the most curious things began happening. Great, strong trunks of ivy came curling up all the piers of the bridge, growing as quickly as a fire grows, wrapping the stones round, splitting, breaking, separating them. The walls of the bridge turned into hedges gay with hawthorn for a moment and then disappeared as the whole thing with a rush and a rumble collapsed into the swirling water. With much

splashing, screaming, and laughter the revelers waded or swam or danced across the ford ("Hurrah! It's the Ford of Beruna again now!" cried the girls) and up the bank on the far side and into the town.



Everyone in the streets fled before their faces. The first house they came to was a school: a girls' school, where a lot of Narnian girls, with their hair done very tight and ugly tight collars round their necks and thick tickly stockings on their legs, were having a history lesson. The sort of "History" that was taught in Narnia under Miraz's rule was duller than the truest history you ever read and less true than the most exciting adventure story.



"If you don't attend, Gwendolen," said the mistress, "and stop looking out of the window, I shall have to give you an order-mark."

"But please, Miss Prizzle—" began Gwendolen.

"Did you hear what I said, Gwendolen?" asked Miss Prizzle.

"But please, Miss Prizzle," said Gwendolen, "there's a LION!"

"Take two order-marks for talking nonsense," said Miss Prizzle. "And now—" A roar interrupted her. Ivy came curling in at the windows of the classroom. The walls became a mass of shimmering green, and leafy branches arched overhead where the ceiling had been. Miss Prizzle found she was standing on grass in a forest glade. She clutched at her desk to steady herself, and found that the desk was a rose-bush. Wild people such as she had never even imagined were crowding round her. Then she saw the Lion, screamed and fled, and with her fled her class, who were mostly dumpy, prim little girls with fat legs. Gwendolen hesitated.

"You'll stay with us, sweetheart?" said Aslan.

"Oh, *may* I? Thank you, thank you," said Gwendolen. Instantly she joined hands with two of the Maenads, who whirled her round in a merry dance and helped her take off some of the unnecessary and uncomfortable clothes that she was wearing.

Wherever they went in the little town of Beruna it was the same.

Most of the people fled, a few joined them. When they left the town they were a larger and a merrier company.

They swept on across the level fields on the north bank, or left bank, of the river. At every farm animals came out to join them. Sad old donkeys who had never known joy grew suddenly young again; chained dogs broke their chains; horses kicked their carts to pieces and came trotting along with them—clap-clap—kicking up the mud and whinnying.



At a well in a yard they met a man who was beating a boy. The stick burst into flower in the man's hand. He tried to drop it, but it stuck to his hand. His arm became a branch, his body the trunk of a tree, his feet took root. The boy, who had been crying a moment before, burst out laughing and joined them.

At a little town half-way to Beaversdam, where two rivers met, they came to another school, where a tired-looking girl was teaching arithmetic to a number of boys who looked very like pigs. She looked out of the window and saw the divine revelers singing up the street and a stab of joy went through her heart. Aslan stopped right under the window and looked up at her.

"Oh, don't, don't," she said. "I'd love to. But I mustn't. I must stick to my work. And the children would be frightened if they saw you."

"Frightened?" said the most pig-like of the boys. "Who's she talking to out of the window? Let's tell the inspector she talks to people out of the window when she ought to be teaching us."

"Let's go and see who it is," said another boy, and they all came crowding to the window. But as soon as their mean little faces looked out, Bacchus gave a great cry of *Euan, euoi-oi-oi-oi* and the boys all began howling with fright and trampling one another down to get out of the door and jumping out of the windows. And it was said afterward (whether truly or not) that those particular little boys were never seen again, but that there were a lot of very fine little pigs in that part of the country which had never been there before.

"Now, Dear Heart," said Aslan to the Mistress: and she jumped down and joined them.

At Beaversdam they re-crossed the river and came east again along the southern bank. They came to a little cottage where a child stood in the doorway crying. "Why are you crying, my love?" asked Aslan. The

child, who had never seen a picture of a lion, was not afraid of him. "Auntie's very ill," she said. "She's going to die." Then Aslan went to go in at the door of the cottage, but it was too small for him. So, when he had got his head through, he pushed with his shoulders (Lucy and Susan fell off when he did this) and lifted the whole house up and it fell backward and apart. And there, still in her bed, though the bed was now in the open air, lay a little old woman who looked as if she had Dwarf blood in her. She was at death's door, but when she opened her eyes and saw the bright, hairy head of the lion staring into her face, she did not scream or faint. She said, "Oh, Aslan! I knew it was true. I've been waiting for this all my life. Have you come to take me away?"

"Yes, Dearest," said Aslan. "But not the long journey yet." And as he spoke, like the flush creeping along the underside of a cloud at sunrise, the color came back to her white face and her eyes grew bright and she sat up and said, "Why, I do declare I feel *that* better. I think I could take a little breakfast this morning."

"Here you are, mother," said Bacchus, dipping a pitcher in the cottage well and handing it to her. But what was in it now was not water but the richest wine, red as red-currant jelly, smooth as oil, strong as beef, warming as tea, cool as dew.

"Eh, you've done something to our well," said the old woman. "That makes a nice change, that does." And she jumped out of bed.

"Ride on me," said Aslan, and added to Susan and Lucy, "You two queens will have to run now."

"But we'd like that just as well," said Susan. And off they went again.

And so at last, with leaping and dancing and singing, with music and laughter and roaring and barking and neighing, they all came to the place where Miraz's army stood flinging down their swords and holding up their hands, and Peter's army, still holding their weapons and breathing hard, stood round them with stern and glad faces. And the first thing that happened was that the old woman slipped off Aslan's back and ran across to Caspian and they embraced one another; for she was his old nurse.

HOOFSTUK 14

Almal is baie besig



'n Rukkie voor twee sit Trumpels en die ratel saam

met die res van die wesens aan die kant van die woud en kyk na die glinsterende linies van Miraz se leer wat omtrent twee pylskote van hulle af is.

Tussenin is 'n vierkantige stuk gras vir die tweegeveg uitgemeet. By die twee verste hoeke staan Glozél en Sopespian met ontblote swaarde. By die naaste hoeke staan die reus Wimbelweer en die boepensbeer wat ten spyte van al die waarskuwings aan sy pote suig en baie verspot lyk. Om hiervoor te ver- goed, lyk Glenstorm wat botstil aan die regterkant van die kryt staan en net nou en dan 'n hoef op die grond stamp baie indrukwekkender as die Telmareense baron wat aan die linkerkant oorkant hom staan. Peter het so pas met Edmund en die doktor hand geskud en stap nader, gereed vir die stryd. Dit voel soos die oomblik net voor die afset- ter 'n skoot by 'n belangrike resies afvuur, net baie erger.

“Ek wens Aslan het gekom voordat dié geveg begin het,” sê Trumpels.

“Ek ook,” sê Truffelsoeker. “Maar kyk agter jou.” “Koeie en kraaie!” prewel die dwerg onmiddellik nadat hy dit gedoen het. “Wat’s dit? Hengse mense - pragtige mense — soos gode en godinne en reuse. Honderde en duisende van hulle hier agter ons. Wat is hulle?”

“Dis die bosnimfe en die boomnimfe en die boommen- se,” sê Truffelsoeker. “Aslan het hulle wakker gemaak.”

“Gmf!” sê die dwerg. “Dit sal van groot nut wees as die vyand enige verraad beplan. Maar dit gaan die hoof- koning niks help as Miraz behendiger as hy met die swaard is nie.”

Die ratel sê niks, want Peter en Miraz het die kryt nou van teenoorgestelde kante af binnegegaan, albei te voet, albei in maliekolder, met helms en skilde. Hulle stap nader tot hulle baie na aan mekaar is. Albei buig en dit lyk asof hulle iets sê, maar dis onmoontlik om te hoor wat dit is. Die volgende oomblik flits twee swaarde in die sonlig. Die gekletter is vir 'n sekonde hoorbaar, maar word feitlik dadelik uitgedoof toe albei leërs soos die skare by 'n sokkerwedstryd aan die skree gaan.

“Mooi so, Peter, o skote!” skree Edmund toe hy sien hoe Miraz 'n voile tree en 'n half terugval. “Volg dit gou op!” Peter maak so, en vir 'n oomblik lyk dit asof die ge- veg oor is. Maar dan ruk Miraz hom reg en begin om sy lengte en gewig te benut. “Miraz! Miraz! Die koning! Die koning!” kom die gebrul van die Telmarene. Kaspian en Edmund word bleek van angs.

“Peter moes 'n paar vreeslike houes verduur,” sê Edmund.

“Haai!” sê Kaspian. “Wat is nou aan die gang?”

“Hulle breek weg,” sê Edmund, “'n Bietjie moeg, sou ek sê. Wag. A, daar begin hulle weer, hierdie keer meer wetenskaplik. Sirkel om mekaar, toets mekaar se verde- diging.”

“Ek is bevrees Miraz ken sy werk,” prewel die doktor. Maar sy woorde is skaars koud of daar is 'n amper oor- verdowende geklap en geskree en

helmets wat die lug in gegooi word onder die Ou Narniane.

“Wat was dit? Wat was dit?” vra die doktor. “My ou oë het dit gemis.”

“Die hoofkoning het hom onder die arm geprik,” sê Kaspian wat nog steeds hande klap. “Net daar waar die punt deur die maliekolder se mousgat kan gaan. Eerste bloed.”

“Maar nou lyk dit weer lelik,” sê Edmund. “Peter ge- bruik nie sy skild reg nie. Sy linkerarm moet seergekry het.”

Dit is alte waar. Enigeen kan sien Peter se skild hang skeef. Die Telmarene skree al harder en harder.

“Jy het al meer gevegte as ek gesien,” sê Kaspian. “Is daar nog enige kans oor?”

“Bitter min,” sê Edmund. “Ek sou sê hy kan *dalk* nog wen. As hy gelukkig is.”

“O, hoekom het ons hom dit laat doen?” sê Kaspian.

Skielik sterf die geskree aan albei kante weg. Vir ’n rukkie is Edmund uit die veld geslaan. Dan sê hy, “O, ek sien. Hulle het ooreengekom om te rus. Komaan, doktor Kornelius. Ek en jy kan dalk iets vir die hoofkoning doen.” Hulle hardloop na die kryt en Peter kom hulle tegemoet. Sy gesig is rooi en natgesweet en sy borskas dein op en neer.

“Is jou linkerarm gewond?” vra Edmund.

“Dis nie juis ’n wond nie,” sê Peter. “Ek het die voile gewig van sy skouer teen my skild gekry - soos ’n vag stene — en die kant van my skild het my pols seergemaak. Ek dink nie dis gebreek nie, maar dit kan verswik wees. As julle dit baie styf sal verbind, behoort dit te help.”

Terwyl hulle dit doen, vra Edmund benoud, “Wat dink jy van hom, Peter?”

“Taai,” sê Peter, “Baie taai. Ek het ’n kans as ek hom aan die hardloop kan hou tot sy gewig en sy kortasem- righeid teen hom begin tel - veral in hierdie warm son.

As ek eerlik moet wees: ek het nie juis andersins ’n kans nie. Sê liefde vir - vir almal by die huis, Ed, as hy my onderkry. Hier kom hy nou juis die kryt binne. Tot siens, ou maat. Tot siens, doktor. En hoor hier, Ed, sê iets besonder gaafs van my vir Trumpels. Hy’s ’n ou staat- maker.”

Edmund kan nie praat nie. Met ’n siek gevoel in sy maag stap hy saam met die doktor terug na hul eie linies.

Maar die nuwe ronde verloop goed. Peter kan nou sy skild gebruik en hy maak beslis goeie gebruik van sy voete. Hy speel nou amper aan-aan met Miraz: bly buite bereik, verander van posisie en laat die vyand werk.

“Lafaard!” jou die Telmarene hom uit. “Hoekom staan jy nie jou man nie?”

Raak jy bang, hm? Jy't kom veg, nie dans nie. Ha!"

"O, ek hoop nie hy luister na hulle nie," sê Kaspien.

"Nie hy nie," sê Edmund. "Jy ken hom nie - Oe!" - want Miraz het uiteindelik 'n hou ingekry, op Peter se helm. Peter steier, gly sywaarts en val op een knie. Die Telamarene se gebrul rys op soos die geraas van die see. "Nou, Miraz!" skree hulle. "Nou. Gou! Gou! Maak hom dood." Dit is inderdaad nie nodig om die troonrower aan te moedig nie. Hy is reeds op Peter. Edmund byt sy lippe tot die bloed kom toe die swaard na Peter toe flits. Dit lyk asof sy kop afgekap gaan word. Dankie vader! Dit spat weg van sy regterskouer af. Die dwerggemaakte maliekolder hou en breek nie.

"Liewe land!" skree Edmund. "Hy's weer op. Nou, Peter, nou!"

"Ek kon nie sien wat gebeur het nie," sê die dokter. "Hoe het hy dit gedoen?"

"Miraz se arm gegryp toe sy swaard ondertoe kom," sê Trumpels wat van vreugde dans. "Daar's vir jou 'n man! Gebruik sy vyand se arm soos 'n leer. Die hoofko ning! Die hoofkoning! Ou Narnia bo!"

"Kyk," sê Truffelsoeker. "Miraz is kwaad. Dit is goed." Hulle takel mekaar nou met alle mag. Dis so 'n gemaal van houe dat dit onmoontlik lyk dat niemand nog dood is nie. Soos die opgewondenheid groei, sterf die geskree feitlik weg. Die toeskouers hou hul asem op. Dit is ver- skriklik, maar ook manjifiek.

'n Groot uitroep styg uit die Ou Narniane se geledere op. Miraz is plat - nie deur Peter platgeslaan nie, maar hy lê op sy gesig nadat hy oor 'n graspol gestruikel het. Peter tree terug en wag vir hom om op te staan.

"O, deksels, deksels, deksels," sê Edmund binnens- monds. "Moet hy so ordentlik wees? Maar hy moet seker. Dis wat gebeur as 'n mens 'n ridder *en* die hoofkoning is. En dis seker wat Aslan sal wil hê. Maar daardie derdui- wel gaan nou-nou weer opstaan en dan - "

Maar "daardie derdui wel" het nooit weer opgestaan nie. Die lords Glozél en Sopespian het hul planne gereed gehad. Toe hulle die koning sien val, spring hulle in die kryt en skree, "Verraad! Verraad! Die Narniaanse ver- raaiër het hom in die rug gestek terwyl hy hulpeloos hier lê. Gryp jul wapens! Kry jul wapens, Telmar!"

Peter weet skaars wat aangaan. Hy sien twee groot mans wat met ontblote swaarde op hom afpyl. Toe spring die derde Telmareen oor die toue aan sy linker- kant.

"Gryp jul wapens, Narnia! Verraad!" skree Peter. As al drie hom gelyk getakel het, sou hy nooit weer iets gesê het nie. Maar Glozél steek vas om sy eie koning daar waar hy lê, dood te steek: "Dis vir jou belediging van-

oggend,” fluister hy toe die lem wegsink. Peter swaai om na Sopespian, slaan sy bene onder hom uit en kap sy kop met die terugswaai af. Nou is Edmund aan sy sy met die kreet, “Narnia, Narnia! Die leeu!” Die hele Telmareense leër storm op hulle af. Die reus strompel vorentoe, buk laag en swaai sy knuppel. Die sentours val aan. *Tweng, tweng* agter hulle en *sis, sis* bo hulle koppe kom die dwerge se pyle. Trumpels veg aan sy linkerkant. Die stryd het begin.

“Kom terug, Riepetjiep, jou klein sot!” skree Peter. “Jy sal vermoor word. Dis nie ’n plek vir muise nie.” Want die verspotte klein diertjies dans in en uit tussen beide leers se voete en steek dat dit gons met hul swaarde. Daardie dag voel menige Telmareense soldaat hoe sy voet skielik deur ’n dosyn vleispenne deurboor word, hop vloekend van pyn op een voet rond en slaan selfs neer. Wanneer hy val, speel die muise met hom klaar; indien nie, dan wel iemand anders.

Maar net voor die Ou Narniane die geveg regtig begin geniet, kom hulle agter die vyand val terug. Woes- te ou vegters word wit en staar verskrik — nie na die Ou Narniane nie, maar na iets agter hulle — en gooi dan hul wapens neer terwyl hulle, “Die woud! Die woud! Die einde van die wêreld!” skree.

Spoedig kan nóg hul krete, nóg die geluid van wapens gehoor word, want alles word verdrink in die gedreun soos die oseaan van die wakker gemaakte bome wat deur die linies van Peter se leër bars om die Telmarene agter- na te sit. Het jy al ooit op die kant van ’n groot woud op ’n hoë heuwel gestaan as ’n wilde suidwester op ’n herf- saand in dolle vaart daaroor waai? Stel jou voor hoe dit moet klink. En verbeel jou dan die woud storm op jou af, pleks dat dit op een plek bly staan, en dit is nie meer bome nie, maar reusemense; maar nog steeds bome, met lang arms wat soos takke waai en swaaiende koppe en blare wat in vlae om hulle warrel. Dit is hoe dit vir die Telmarene voel. Dit is selfs vir die Narniane ietwat ont- stellend. Binne ’n paar minute hardloop al Miraz se vol- gelinge langs die Grootrivier af in die hoop dat hulle die brug by die dorp van Beruna sal kan oorsteek en hulself daar agter skansmure en geslote hekke sal kan verdedig.

Hulle bereik die rivier, maar daar is geen brug nie. Dit het sedert die vorige dag verdwyn. Toe oorval volslae paniek en skrik hulle en almal van hulle gee oor.

Maar wat het van die brug geword?

Vroeg daardie oggend, toe die meisies na ’n paar uur se slaap wakker word, staan Aslan oor hulle en hulle hoor sy stem, “Ons gaan vakansie hou.” Hulle vryf hul oë en kyk om hulle rond. Die bome is almal weg, maar kan nog

gesien word waar hulle in 'n donker massa na Aslan se Hoop aanstap. Bacchus en die menades - sy woeste, malkopmeisies - en Silenus is nog by hulle. Lucy is heeltemal uitgerus en spring op. Almal is wakker, almal lag, fluite word gespeel, simbale klater. Diere, nie pratende diere nie, drom uit alle rigtings om hulle saam.

“Wat is dit, Aslan?” vra Lucy. Haar oë dans en haar voete wil huppel.

“Kom, kinders,” sê hy. “Kom ry weer vandag op my rug.”

“O, lekker!” roep Lucy uit en albei meisies klim op die warm goue rug soos hulle wie weet hoeveel jare gelede gedoen het. Toe vertrek die hele geselskap — Aslan voor, Bacchus en sy menades springend, dansend en tuimelend agterna, die diere om hulle trippelend en Silenus en sy donkie agterna.

Hulle draai effens na regs, jaag teen 'n steil heuwel af en dan is die lang Brug van Beruna voor hulle. Maar voor hulle dit kan oorsteek, kom 'n groot, nat, bebaarde kop, groter as 'n man s'n en bedek met palmiet, uit die water. Hy kyk na Aslan en 'n diep stem kom uit sy mond.

“Gegroet, meneer,” sê hy. “Maak los my kettings.” “Wie op aarde is *dit*?” iluister Susan.

“Ek dink dis die riviergod, maar sjuut,” sê Lucy.

“Bacchus,” sê Aslan. “Bevry hom van sy kettings.”

Dis seker die brug, dink Lucy. En dit is ook. Bacchus en sy mense plas voorentoe deur die vlak water en 'n minuut later begin die vreemdste dinge gebeur. Groot, sterk klimopstamme krul op teen die brug se pilare en groei so vinnig soos 'n vuur versprei. Hulle vou om die klippe en kraak, breek en druk die pilare uitmekaar. Die brug se mure verander in meidoringheinings wat vir 'n oomblik vrolik lyk en dan met 'n gerammel in die kolk- ende water verdwyn. Met 'n groot geplas, geskree en gelag waad of swem of dans die pretmakers oor die drif (“Hoera! Dis nou weer die Drif van Beruna!” skree die meisies) en teen die oorkantste walle op en tot in die dorp.

Almal in die strate vlug voor hulle uit. Die eerste gebou waarby hulle kom, is 'n skool: 'n meisieskool waar 'n klomp Narniaanse meisies met hul hare styf vasgebind en lelike stywe krae om hul nekke en dik, krapperige kouse aan hul bene 'n Geskiedenisles het. Die soort “geskiedenis” wat onder Miraz se bewind in Narnia onderrig word, is verveliger as die waarste geskiedenis wat jy ooit sal lees en minder waar as die mees opwindende avontuurverhaal.

“As jy nie aandag gee nie, Gwendolen,” sê die juffrou, “en nie ophou om deur die venster te kyk nie, sal ek jou moet straf.”

“Ekskuus, juffrou Prizzel, maar - ” begin Gwendolen.

“Het jy gehoor wat ek sê, Gwendolen?” vra juffrou Prizzel.

“Maar juffrou Prizzel, asseblief,” sê Gwendolen, “daar’s ’n LEEU!”

“Twee strafpunte vir onsin praat,” kondig juffrou

Prizzel aan. “En nou - ” ’n Gebrul onderbreek haar. Klim- op kronkel deur die klaskamer se vensters. Die mure word ’n glimmende groen massa en takke vol blare krul bo hul koppe waar die plafon was. Juffrou Prizzel kom agter sy staan op gras, in ’n oop plek in ’n woud. Sy gryp na haar tafel om regop te bly en sien die tafel het ’n roosbos ge- word. Wilde mense soos sy haar nooit kon voorstel nie, drom om haar saam. Toe sien sy die leeu, skree en slaan op vlug en die klas, meestal dikkerige, preutse dogtertjies met dik beentjies, sit haar agterna. Gwendolen huiwer.

“Gaan jy by ons bly, liefie?” vra Aslan.

“O, *mag* ek? Dankie, dankie,” sê Gwendolen. Sy vat on- middellik twee van die menades se hande en hulle tol haar om in ’n vrolike dans en help haar om sommige van die onnodige en ongemaklike klere wat sy aanhet, uit te trek.

Waar hulle ook al in die klein dorpie van Beruna gaan, is dit dieselfde. Die meeste mense vlug; enkeles sluit by hulle aan. Toe hulle die dorp verlaat, is hulle ’n groter en selfs vroliker geselskap.

Hulle swiep oor die gelyk landerye aan die rivier se noordelike of linkerwal. By elke plaas kom diere uit en sluit by hulle aan. Mistroostige ou donkies wat nog nooit enige vreugde geken het nie, word skielik weer jonk; honde breek hul kettings; perde skop hul karre uitmekaar en galop klop-klop saam met hulle, skop modder die lug in en runnik.

By ’n put op iemand se werf loop hulle ’n man raak wat ’n seun slaan. Die stok maak blomme in die man se hand. Hy probeer dit neergooi, maar dit sit aan sy hand vas. Sy arm word ’n tak, sy liggaam ’n boomstam en sy voete skiet wortel. Die seun wat ’n oomblik tevore gehuil het, bars uit van die lag en sluit by hulle aan.

By ’n klein dorpie halfpad na die Bewersdam waar twee riviere saamloop, kom hulle by nog ’n skool waar ’n moeë meisie Wiskunde gee vir ’n paar seuns wat nogal baie soos varkies lyk. Sy kyk by die venster uit en sien die gelukkige pretmakers singend in die straat af loop en ’n steekpyn van vreugde skiet deur haar hart. Aslan gaan staan reg onder die venster en kyk op na haar.

“O, moenie, moenie,” sê sy. “Ek wil so graag. Maar ek mag nie. Ek moet my werk doen. En die kinders sal skrik as hulle jou sien.”

“Bang?” sê die seun wat die meeste soos ’n varkie lyk. “Met wie praat sy daar by die venster? Kom ons gaan sê vir die inspekteur sy praat met mense deur die venster wanneer sy moet klasgee.”

“Kom ons gaan kyk wie dit is,” sê nog ’n seun en hulle gaan na die venster. Maar toe hul gemene gesiggies uit- kyk, roep Bacchus hard uit *Euan, euoi-oi-oi-oi* en al die seuns begin skree van skrik en trap op mekaar om by die deur te kom en spring deur die vensters. Die mense het agterna beweer (ons weet nie of dit waar is nie) dat daar- die spesifieke seuns nooit weer gesien is nie, maar dat ’n klomp baie oulike klein varkies wat nie voorheen daar was nie skielik in daardie deel van die land opgedaag het.

“Kora, my liewe kind,” sê Aslan vir die skooljuffrou en sy spring deur die venster en sluit by hulle aan.

By die Bewersdam steek hulle die rivier weer oor en gaan dan ooswaarts langs die suidelike wal. Hulle kom by ’n klein huisie waar ’n kind in die deur staan en huil.

“Waaroor huil jy, hartjie?” vra Aslan. Die kind het nog nooit ’n prent van ’n leeu gesien nie en is nie vir hom bang nie.

“Tannie is baie siek,” sê sy. “Sy’s besig om dood te gaan.”

Aslan loop nader en wil by die deur ingaan, maar dis te klein vir hom. Toe sy kop deur is, druk hy met sy skouers (Lucy en Susan val af toe hy dit doen) en lig die hele huis op sodat dit agteroor tuimel en uitmekaar val. En daar, nog in haar bed, lê ’n klein ou vroultjie wat lyk asof sy dwergbloed kan hê. Sy is op die drumpel van die dood, maar toe sy haar oë oopmaak en sy sien die blink harige kop van die leeu wat na haar staar, skree sy nie en word ook nie flou nie. Sy sê, “O Aslan! Ek het geweet dis waar. Ek wag nog my hele lewe hiervoor. Het jy my kom haal?”

“Ja, liefste vrou,” sê Aslan. “Maar nog nie vir die lang reis nie.” En terwyl hy praat, kruip die kleur terug in haar wit gesig soos die blos aan die onderkant van ’n wolk met sonsopkoms, en haar oë word helder en sy sit regop en sê, “Wel, ek moet erken, ek voel baie beter. Ek dink ek kan vanoggend ietsie vir ontbyt eet.”

“Hierso, moeder,” sê Bacchus en dompel ’n beker in die kothuis se put en gee dit vir haar aan. Wat nou daarin is, is nie water nie, maar die rykste wyn, so rooi soos jel- lie gemaak van rooiaalbessies, so glad soos olie, so krag- tig soos beesvleis, so warm soos tee en so koel soos dou.

“Hm, jy het iets aan ons put gedoen,” sê die ou vrou. “Dis ’n lekker verandering.” En sy spring uit die bed.

“Klim op,” sê Aslan, en dan vir Lucy en Susan, “Julie twee koninginne sal nou moet draf.”

“Ons gee glad nie om nie,” sê Susan. En weg is hulle. En so, uiteindelik, springend en dansend, met musiek en ’n gelag en gebrul en geblaf en gerunnik kom hulle by die plek waar Miraz se leer hul wapens neergegooi het en hul

arms in die lug hou; die plek waar Peter se leer nog gewapen en met hortende asemhaling om hulle staan en hulle met streng dog verheugde gesigte dophou. Die eerste ding wat gebeur, is dat die ou vrou van Aslan se rug afspring en na Kaspian hardloop en hulle mekaar omhels, want sy is sy ou oppasster.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

ASLAN MAKES A DOOR IN THE AIR

AT THE SIGHT OF ASLAN THE CHEEKS OF the Telmarine soldiers became the color of cold gravy, their knees knocked together, and many fell on their faces. They had not believed in lions and this made their fear greater. Even the Red Dwarfs, who knew that he came as a friend, stood with open mouths and could not speak. Some of the Black Dwarfs, who had been of Nikabrik's party, began to edge away. But all the Talking Beasts surged round the Lion, with purrs and grunts and squeaks and whinnies of delight, fawning on him with their tails, rubbing against him, touching him reverently with their noses and going to and fro under his body and between his legs. If you have ever seen a little cat loving a big dog whom it knows and trusts, you will have a pretty good picture of their behavior. Then Peter, leading Caspian, forced his way through the crowd of animals.

"This is Caspian, Sir," he said. And Caspian knelt and kissed the Lion's paw.

"Welcome, Prince," said Aslan. "Do you feel yourself sufficient to take up the Kingship of Narnia?"

"I—I don't think I do, Sir," said Caspian. "I'm only a kid."

"Good," said Aslan. "If you had felt yourself sufficient, it would have been a proof that you were not. Therefore, under us and under the High King, you shall be King of Narnia, Lord of Cair Paravel, and Emperor of the Lone Islands. You and your heirs while your race lasts. And your coronation—but what have we here?" For at that moment a curious little procession was approaching—eleven Mice, six of whom carried between them something on a litter made of branches, but the litter was no bigger than a large atlas. No one has ever seen mice more woebegone than these. They were plastered with mud—some with blood too—and their ears were down and their whiskers drooped and their tails dragged in the grass, and their leader piped on his slender pipe a melancholy tune. On the litter lay what seemed little better than a damp heap of fur; all that was left of Reepicheep. He was still breathing, but more dead than alive, gashed with innumerable wounds, one paw crushed, and, where his tail had been, a bandaged stump.

"Now, Lucy," said Aslan.

Lucy had her diamond bottle out in a moment. Though only a drop was needed on each of Reepicheep's wounds, the wounds were so many that there was a long and anxious silence before she had finished and the Master Mouse sprang from the litter. His hand went at once to his sword hilt, with the other he twirled his whiskers. He

bowed.

"Hail, Aslan!" came his shrill voice. "I have the honor—" But then he suddenly stopped.



The fact was that he still had no tail—whether that Lucy had forgotten it or that her cordial, though it could heal wounds, could not make things grow again. Reepicheep became aware of his loss as made his bow; perhaps it altered something in his balance. He looked over his right shoulder. Failing to see his tail, he strained his neck further till he had to turn his shoulders and his whole body followed. But by that time his hind-quarters had turned too and were out of sight. Then he strained his neck looking over his shoulder again, with the same result. Only after he had turned completely round three times did he realize the dreadful truth.

"I am confounded," said Reepicheep to Aslan. "I am completely out of countenance. I must crave your indulgence for appearing in this unseemly fashion."

"It becomes you very well, Small One," said Aslan.

"All the same," replied Reepicheep, "if anything could be done ... Perhaps her Majesty?" and here he bowed to Lucy.

"But what do you want with a tail?" asked Aslan.

"Sir," said the Mouse, "I can eat and sleep and die for my King without one. But a tail is the honor and glory of a Mouse."

"I have sometimes wondered, friend," said Aslan, "whether you do not think too much about your honor."

"Highest of all High Kings," said Reepicheep, "permit me to remind you that a very small size has been bestowed on us Mice, and if we did not guard our dignity, some (who weigh worth by inches) would allow themselves very unsuitable pleasantries at our expense. That is why I have been at some pains to make it known that no one who does not wish to feel this sword as near his heart as I can reach shall talk in my presence about Traps or Toasted Cheese or Candles: no, Sir—not the tallest fool in Narnia!" Here he glared very fiercely up at Wimbleweather, but the Giant, who was always a stage behind everyone else, had not yet discovered what was being talked about down at his feet, and so missed the point.

"Why have your followers all drawn *their* swords, may I ask?" said Aslan.

“May it please your High Majesty,” said the second Mouse, whose name was Peepiceek, “we are all waiting to cut off our own tails if our Chief must go without his. We will not bear the shame of wearing an honor which is denied to the High Mouse.”

“Ah!” roared Aslan. “You have conquered me. You have great hearts. Not for the sake of your dignity, Reepicheep, but for the love that is between you and your people, and still more for the kindness your people showed me long ago when you ate away the cords that bound me on the Stone Table (and it was then, though you have long forgotten it, that you began to be *Talking Mice*), you shall have your tail again.”

Before Aslan had finished speaking the new tail was in its place. Then, at Aslan’s command, Peter bestowed the Knighthood of the Order of the Lion on Caspian, and Caspian, as soon as he was knighted, himself bestowed it on Trufflehunter and Trumpkin and Reepicheep, and made Doctor Cornelius his Lord Chancellor, and confirmed the Bulgy Bear in his hereditary office of Marshal of the Lists. And there was great applause.

After this the Telmarine soldiers, firmly but without taunts or blows, were taken across the ford and all put under lock and key in the town of Beruna and given beef and beer. They made a great fuss about wading in the river, for they all hated and feared running water just as much as they hated and feared woods and animals. But in the end the nuisance was over: and then the nicest parts of that long day began.

Lucy, sitting close to Aslan and divinely comfortable, wondered what the trees were doing. At first she thought they were merely dancing; they were certainly going round slowly in two circles, one from left to right and the other from right to left. Then she noticed that they kept throwing something down in the center of both circles. Sometimes she thought they were cutting off long strands of their hair; at other times it looked as if they were breaking off bits of their fingers—but, if so, they had plenty of fingers to spare and it did not hurt them. But whatever they were throwing down, when it reached the ground, it became brushwood or dry sticks. Then three or four of the Red Dwarfs came forward with their tinder boxes and set light to the pile, which first crackled, and then blazed, and finally roared as a woodland bonfire on midsummer night ought to do. And everyone sat down in a wide circle round it.

Then Bacchus and Silenus and the Maenads began a dance, far wilder than the dance of the trees; not merely a dance for fun and beauty (though it was that too) but a magic dance of plenty, and where their hands touched, and where their feet fell, the feast came into existence—sides of roasted meat that filled the grove with delicious smell, and wheaten cakes and oaten cakes, honey and many-colored

sugars and cream as thick as porridge and as smooth as still water, peaches, nectarines, pomegranates, pears, grapes, strawberries, raspberries—pyramids and cataracts of fruit. Then, in great wooden cups and bowls and mazers, wreathed with ivy, came the wines; dark, thick ones like syrups of mulberry juice, and clear red ones like red jellies liquefied, and yellow wines and green wines and yellow-green and greenish-yellow.

But for the tree people different fare was provided. When Lucy saw Clodsley Shovel and his moles scuffling up the turf in various places (which Bacchus had pointed out to them) and realized that the trees were going to eat *earth* it gave her rather a shudder. But when she saw the earths that were actually brought to them she felt quite different. They began with a rich brown loam that looked almost exactly like chocolate; so like chocolate, in fact, that Edmund tried a piece of it, but he did not find it at all nice. When the rich loam had taken the edge off their hunger, the trees turned to an earth of the kind you see in Somerset, which is almost pink. They said it was lighter and sweeter. At the cheese stage they had a chalky soil, and then went on to delicate confections of the finest gravels powdered with choice silver sand. They drank very little wine, and it made the Hollies very talkative: for the most part they quenched their thirst with deep drafts of mingled dew and rain, flavored with forest flowers and the airy taste of the thinnest clouds.



Thus Aslan feasted the Narnians till long after the sunset had died away, and the stars had come out; and the great fire, now hotter but less noisy, shone like a beacon in the dark woods, and the frightened Telmarines saw it from far away and wondered what it might mean. The best thing of all about this feast was that there was no breaking up or going away, but as the talk grew quieter and slower, one after another would begin to nod and finally drop off to sleep with feet toward the fire and good friends on either side, till at last there was silence all round the circle, and the chattering of water over stone at the Ford of Beruna could be heard once more. But all night Aslan and the Moon gazed upon each other with joyful and unblinking eyes.



Next day messengers (who were chiefly squirrels and birds) were sent all over the country with a proclamation to the scattered Telmarines—including, of course, the prisoners in Beruna. They were told that Caspian was now King and that Narnia would henceforth belong to the Talking Beasts and the Dwarfs and Dryads and Fauns and other creatures quite as much as to the men. Any who chose to stay under the new conditions might do so; but for those who did not like the idea, Aslan would provide another home. Anyone who wished to go there must come to Aslan and the Kings at the Ford of Beruna by noon on the fifth day. You may imagine that this caused plenty of head-scratching among the Telmarines. Some of them, chiefly the young ones, had, like Caspian, heard stories of the Old Days and were delighted that they had come back. They were already making friends with the creatures. These all decided to stay in Narnia. But most of the older men, especially those who had been important under Miraz, were sulky and had no wish to live in a country where they could not rule the roost. “Live here with a lot of blooming performing animals! No fear,” they said. “And ghosts too,” some added with a shudder. “That’s what those there Dryads really are. It’s not canny.” They were also suspicious. “I don’t trust ‘em,” they said. “Not with that awful Lion and all. He won’t keep his claws off us long, *you’ll* see.” But then they were equally suspicious of his offer to give them a new home. “Take us off to his den and eat us one by one most likely,” they muttered. And the more they talked to one another the sulkier and more suspicious they became. But on the appointed day more than half of them turned up.



At one end of the glade Aslan had caused to be set up two stakes of wood, higher than a man’s head and about three feet apart. A third, and lighter, piece of wood was bound across them at the top, uniting them, so that the whole thing looked like a doorway from nowhere into nowhere. In front of this stood Aslan himself with Peter on his

right and Caspian on his left. Grouped round them were Susan and Lucy, Trumpkin and Trufflehunter, the Lord Cornelius, Glenstorm, Reepicheep, and others. The children and the Dwarfs had made good use of the royal wardrobes in what had been the castle of Miraz and was now the castle of Caspian, and what with silk and cloth of gold, with snowy linen glancing through slashed sleeves, with silver mail shirts and jeweled sword-hilts, with gilt helmets and feathered bonnets, they were almost too bright to look at. Even the beasts wore rich chains about their necks. Yet nobody's eyes were on them or the children. The living and strokable gold of Aslan's mane outshone them all. The rest of the Old Narnians stood down each side of the glade. At the far end stood the Telmarines. The sun shone brightly and pennants fluttered in the light wind.

"Men of Telmar," said Aslan, "you who seek a new land, hear my words. I will send you all to your own country, which I know and you do not."

"We don't remember Telmar. We don't know where it is. We don't know what it is like," grumbled the Telmarines.

"You came into Narnia out of Telmar," said Aslan. "But you came into Telmar from another place. You do not belong to this world at all. You came hither, certain generations ago, out of that same world to which the High King Peter belongs."

At this, half the Telmarines began whimpering, "There you are. Told you so. He's going to kill us all, send us right out of the world," and the other half began throwing out their chests and slapping one another on the back and whispering, "There you are. Might have guessed we didn't belong to this place with all its queer, nasty, unnatural creatures. We're of royal blood, you'll see." And even Caspian and Cornelius and the children turned to Aslan with looks of amazement on their faces.

"Peace," said Aslan in the low voice which was nearest to his growl. The earth seemed to shake a little and every living thing in the grove became still as stone.

"You, Sir Caspian," said Aslan, "might have known that you could be no true King of Narnia unless, like the Kings of old, you were a son of Adam and came from the world of Adam's sons. And so you are. Many years ago in that world, in a deep sea of that world which is called the South Sea, a shipload of pirates was driven by storm on an island. And there they did as pirates would: killed the natives and took the native women for wives, and made palm wine, and drank and were drunk, and lay in the shade of the palm trees, and woke up and quarreled, and sometimes killed one another. And in one of these frays six were put to flight by the rest and fled with their women into the center of the island and up a mountain, and went, as they thought, into a cave to

hide. But it was one of the magical places of that world, one of the chinks or chasms between that world and this. There were many chinks or chasms between worlds in old times, but they have grown rarer. This was one of the last: I do not say *the* last. And so they fell, or rose, or blundered, or dropped right through, and found themselves in this world, in the Land of Telmar which was then unpeopled. But why it was unpeopled is a long story: I will not tell it now. And in Telmar their descendants lived and became a fierce and proud people; and after many generations there was a famine in Telmar and they invaded Narnia, which was then in some disorder (but that also would be a long story), and conquered it and ruled it. Do you mark all this well, King Caspian?"

"I do indeed, Sir," said Caspian. "I was wishing that I came of a more honorable lineage."

"You come of the Lord Adam and the Lady Eve," said Aslan. "And that is both honor enough to erect the head of the poorest beggar, and shame enough to bow the shoulders of the greatest emperor on earth. Be content."

Caspian bowed.

"And now," said Aslan, "you men and women of Telmar, will you go back to that island in the world of men from which your fathers first came? It is no bad place. The race of those pirates who first found it has died out, and it is without inhabitants. There are good wells of fresh water, and fruitful soil, and timber for building, and fish in the lagoons; and the other men of that world have not yet discovered it. The chasm is open for your return; but this I must warn you, that once you have gone through, it will close behind you forever. There will be no more commerce between the worlds by that door."

There was silence for a moment. Then a burly, decent-looking fellow among the Telmarine soldiers pushed forward and said:

"Well, I'll take the offer."

"It is well chosen," said Aslan. "And because you have spoken first, strong magic is upon you. Your future in that world shall be good. Come forth."

The man, now a little pale, came forward. Aslan and his court drew aside, leaving him free access to the empty doorway of the stakes.

"Go through it, my son," said Aslan, bending toward him and touching the man's nose with his own. As soon as the Lion's breath came about him, a new look came into the man's eyes—startled, but not unhappy—as if he were trying to remember something. Then he squared his shoulders and walked into the Door.

Everyone's eyes were fixed on him. They saw the three pieces of wood, and through them the trees and grass and sky of Narnia. They saw the man between the doorposts: then, in one second, he had

vanished utterly.

From the other end of the glade the remaining Telmarines set up a wailing. "Ugh! What's happened to him? Do you mean to murder us? We won't go that way." And then one of the clever Telmarines said:

"We don't see any other world through those sticks. If you want us to believe in it, why doesn't one of *you* go? All your own friends are keeping well away from the sticks."



Instantly Reepicheep stood forward and bowed. "If *my* example can be of any service, Aslan," he said, "I will take eleven mice through that arch at your bidding without a moment's delay."

"Nay, little one," said Aslan, laying his velvety paw ever so lightly on Reepicheep's head. "They would do dreadful things to you in that world. They would show you at fairs. It is others who must lead."

"Come on," said Peter suddenly to Edmund and Lucy. "Our time's up."

"What do you mean?" said Edmund.

"This way," said Susan, who seemed to know all about it. "Back into the trees. We've got to change."

"Change what?" asked Lucy.

"Our clothes, of course," said Susan. "Nice fools we'd look on the platform of an English station in *these*."

"But our other things are at Caspian's castle," said Edmund.

"No, they're not," said Peter, still leading the way into the thickest wood. "They're all here. They were brought down in bundles this morning. It's all arranged."

"Was that what Aslan was talking to you and Susan about this morning?" asked Lucy.

"Yes—that and other things," said Peter, his face very solemn. "I can't tell it to you all. There were things he wanted to say to Su and me because we're not coming back to Narnia."

"Never?" cried Edmund and Lucy in dismay.

"Oh, you two are," answered Peter. "At least, from what he said, I'm pretty sure he means you to get back some day. But not Su and me. He says we're getting too old."

"Oh, Peter," said Lucy. "What awful bad luck. Can you bear it?"

“Well, I think I can,” said Peter. “It’s all rather different from what I thought. You’ll understand when it comes to your last time. But, quick, here are our things.”

It was odd, and not very nice, to take off their royal clothes and to come back in their school things (not very fresh now) into that great assembly. One or two of the nastier Telmarines jeered. But the other creatures all cheered and rose up in honor of Peter the High King, and Queen Susan of the Horn, and King Edmund, and Queen Lucy. There were affectionate and (on Lucy’s part) tearful farewells with all their old friends—animal kisses, and hugs from Bulgy Bears, and hands wrung by Trumpkin, and a last tickly, whiskerish embrace with Trufflehunter. And of course Caspian offered the Horn back to Susan and of course Susan told him to keep it. And then, wonderfully and terribly, it was farewell to Aslan himself, and Peter took his place with Susan’s hands on his shoulders and Edmund’s on hers and Lucy’s on his and the first of the Telmarine’s on Lucy’s, and so in a long line they moved forward to the Door. After that came a moment which is hard to describe, for the children seemed to be seeing three things at once. One was the mouth of a cave opening into the glaring green and blue of an island in the Pacific, where all the Telmarines would find themselves the moment they were through the Door. The second was a glade in Narnia, the faces of Dwarfs and Beasts, the deep eyes of Aslan, and the white patches on the Badger’s cheeks. But the third (which rapidly swallowed up the other two) was the gray, gravelly surface of a platform in a country station, and a seat with luggage round it, where they were all sitting as if they had never moved from it—a little flat and dreary for a moment after all they had been through, but also, unexpectedly, nice in its own way, what with the familiar railway smell and the English sky and the summer term before them.

“Well!” said Peter. “We *have* had a time.”

“Bother!” said Edmund. “I’ve left my new torch in Narnia.”





Toe hulle vir Aslan sien, word die Telmareense sol- date se wange die kleur van koue vleissous, hul knieë kap teen mekaar en baie val met hul gesigte plat op die grond. Hulle het nie in leeu geglo nie en dit maak hulle nog banger. Selfs die rooi dwerge wat weet hy is 'n vriend staan oopmond en kan nie praat nie. Party van die swart dwerge wat deel van Nikabrik se geselskap was, begin eenkant toe staan. Maar al die pratende diere swerm om die leeu en spin en snork en piep en runnik van vreugde en streel hom met hul sterte en skuur teen hom en raak vol ontsag met hul neuse aan hom en be- weeg heen en weer onderdeur sy liggaam en tussen sy bene. As jy al ooit 'n klein katjie gesien het wat vir 'n groot hond lief is en hom vertrou, sal jy 'n goeie idee he van wat hier aangaan. Toe dwing Peter sy pad oop deur die skare diere, met Kaspian agterna.

“Dit is Kaspian, meneer,” sê hy. En Kaspian kniel en soen die leeu se poot.

“Welkom, prins,” sê Aslan. “Voel jy gereed om die koningskap van Narnia te aanvaar?”

“Ek - ek dink nie so nie, meneer,” sê Kaspian. “Ek is nog so jonk.”

“Goed,” sê Aslan. “As jy gereed gevoel het, sou dit be- wys het jy is nie. Dus sal jy, onder ons en onder die hoof- koning, koning van Narnia wees, meester van Kair Para-

vel en keiser van die Eilande van Verlatenheid. Jy en jou erfgename, solank jou mense voortbestaan. En jou kro- ning - maar wat gaan hier aan?” Want 'n eienaardige prosessie is op daardie oomblik in aantog — elf muise, waarvan ses iets tussen hulle op 'n draagbaar van takke dra, 'n draagbaar wat nie veel groter as 'n groterige atlas is nie. Niemand het nog ooit muise gesien wat meer bedremmeld lyk nie. Hulle is betakel met modder — party ook met bloed — hul ore hang, hul snorbaarde is verlep, hul sterte sleep in die gras en hul leier speel 'n melan- koliese deuntjie op 'n dun fluit. Op die draagbaar lê iets wat na 'n bondel klam pels lyk: dit wat van Riepetjiep oor is. Hy haal nog asem, maar is meer dood as lewend, vol snye en wonde, een poot is vergruis en waar sy stert moet wees, is 'n verbinde stompie.

“Nou, Lucy,” sê Aslan.

Lucy se diamantbottel is oombliklik gereed. Hoewel net 'n druppel op elkeen van Riepetjiep se wonde nodig is, het hy soveel wonde dat daar 'n lang en benoude stilte heers voor sy klaar is en die muis van die draagbaar af- spring. Sy hand gaan dadelik na sy swaard se hef en met die ander een draai

hy sy snorbaarde. Hy buig.

“Heil, Aslan!” kom sy skril stem. “Ek het die eer - ” Maar dan word hy eensklaps stil.

Die feit van die saak is hy het nog steeds nie ’n stert nie - óf omdat Lucy daarvan vergeet het, óf omdat haar towerdrankie slegs wonde kan genees en nie dinge weer kan laat groei nie. Riepetjiep word bewus van sy verlies toe hy sy buiging maak; dalk het dit sy balans versteur. Hy kyk oor sy regterskouer. Toe hy sy stert nie kan sien nie, rek hy sy nek so ver dat hy sy skouer moet draai en toe kom sy hele lyf agterna. Maar teen daardie tyd het sy agterlyf ook gedraai en dis nog steeds buite sig. Toe forseer hy sy nek om wéér oor sy skouer te kyk, maar met dieselfde resultaat. Eers toe hy drie keer heeltemal in die rondte gedraai het, tref die voile verskriklike waarheid hom.

“Ek is verbyster,” sê Riepetjiep vir Aslan. “Ek is heeltemal oordonder. Ek moet om verskoning vra dat ek op hierdie onwaardige wyse voor u verskyn.”

“Dit pas jou baie goed, kleintjie,” sê Aslan.

“Nogtans,” sê Riepetjiep. “As enigiets gedoen kan word . . . Miskien haar Majesteit?” en hier buig hy voor Lucy.

“Maar wat wil jy met ’n stert maak?” vra Aslan.

“Meneer,” sê die muis, “ek kan sonder een eet en slaap en vir my koning sterf, maar ’n stert bly ’n muis se eer en glorie.”

“Ek het al soms gewonder, vriend,” sê Aslan, “of jy nie te veel aan jou eer dink nie.”

“Hoogste van alle hoofkonings,” sê Riepetjiep, “laat my toe om u daaraan te herinner dat ons muise baie klein is en as ons nie oor ons waardigheid waak nie, sal sommige onder ons (wat waarde in duime meet) op baie onaangename wyse met ons die draak steek. Dit is hoekom ek soveel moeite doen om dit duidelik te maak dat enigemand wat hierdie swaard nie so na aan sy hart wil voel as wat ek kan bykom nie, nie in my teenwoordigheid oor versiersels en geroosterde kaasbroodjies en kerse moet praat nie. Nee, meneer, nie eens die langste dwaas in Narnia nie!” Hier gluur hy baie kwaai na Wimbelaar, maar die reus wat altyd ’n tree agter al die ander is, het nog nie agtergekom waarom daar hier onder by sy voete gepraat word nie, en snap dus nie waarom dit gaan nie.

“Hoekom het al jou volgelinge *hul* swaarde getrek?” vra Aslan.

“As dit u Majesteit sal behaag,” sê die tweede muis wie se naam Piepeswiep is, “ons wag almal om ons eie sterte af te kap as ons bevelvoerder dan sonder een gaan wees. Ons sal die skande om met iets te pronk wat die hoofmuis ontsê is, nie kan verduur nie.”

“A!” brul Aslan. “Julle het my oorreed. Julle het groot harte. Nie ter wille

van jou waardigheid nie, Riepetjiep, maar oor die liefde tussen jou en jou mense en oor die goedhartigheid wat jou mense lank gelede aan my bewys het toe hulle deur die toue wat my op die Steentafel vas- gehou het, geknaag het (en dit was hoe julle *pratende* muise geword het, hoewel julle dit lankal vergeet het), sal jy jou stert terugkry.”

Nog voor Aslan klaar gepraat het, is die nuwe stert op sy plek. Toe, op Aslan se bevel, verleen Aslan die Ridderskap van die Orde van die Leeu aan Kaspian en nadat Kaspian dit ontvang het, verleen hy dit op sy beurt aan Trumpels en Truffelsoeker en Riepetjiep, en doktor Kornelius word sy Groot kanselier en die boepensbeer se oorerflike amp van Maarskalk in die Kryt word bekrag- tig. ’n Dawerende applous volg.

Hierna word die Telmareense soldate ferm, raaar son- der bespotting en houe, oor die drif geneem en in die dorp Beruna toegesluit en beesvleis en bier gegee. Hulle maak ’n groot bohaai omdat hulle deur die rivier moes loop, want hulle haat en vrees lopende water net soos hulle die woude en diere haat en vrees. Maar op die ou end is die ergernis oor en kan die lekkerste deel van die lang dag begin.

Lucy sit heerlijk gemaklik en styf langs Aslan en wonder waarmee die borne besig is. Eers dink sy hulle dans net; hulle beweeg wel stadig om en om in twee sirkels: een van links na regs en die ander een van regs na links. Dan sien sy hulle gooi aanhoudend iets in die middel van die twee sirkels. Soms lyk dit asof hulle lang stringe hare afsny en dan weer asof hulle stukke van hulle vingers afbreek — maar as dit so is, het hulle baie vingers oor en pla dit hulle nie. Maar wat hulle ook al besig is om te doen, wanneer dit op die grond val, word dit bossies of droë stokke. Toe kom drie of vier rooi dwerge met hul tonteldose nader en steek die hoop aan die brand. Eers knetter dit, toe gaan die vlamme op en uiteindelik brul dit soos ’n vreugdevuur in die hartjie van die somer. Al- mal gaan sit in ’n wye kring daarom heen.

Toe begin Bacchus en Silenus en die menades dans, baie wilder as die dans van die bome, nie bloot ’n dans vir die pret en skoonheid nie (hoewel dit ook die geval is), maar ’n betowerde dans van oorvloed: en waar hul hande raak en hul voete val, word die fees ’n werklikheid — groot geroosterde vleissnitte wat die hele woud met die heerlikste geure vul en koring- en hawermoutkoekies, heuning en gekleurde suikers en room so dik soos pap en so glad soos water, perskes, kaalperskes, granate, pere, druiwe, aarbeie, frambose — stapels vrugte. Toe, in groot houtkoppies en bakke en bekere omstrengel met klimop, kom die wyne: dik rooies soos moerbeistroop en helder- rooies soos gesmelte rooi jellie en geles en groenes en geelgroenes en groengeles.

Maar vir die boommense is daar ander kos. Toe Lucy sien hoe Kluiten Skoffel en sy molle die grond omdolwe op plekke wat Bacchus vir hulle uitwys en besef die bome gaan *grond* eet, gril sy effens. Maar toe sy die grond sien wat na hulle gebring word, voel sy anders. Hulle begin met ryk bruin leemgrond wat presies soos sjokolade lyk, so baie soos sjokolade dat Edmund 'n hap vat, maar glad nie daarvan hou nie. Toe hul ergste honger gestil is, kry die bome 'n soort grond wat amper pienk van kleur is. Hulle sê dit smaak ligter en soeter. Op die kaasstadium kry hulle kalkagtige grond en toe delikate lekkergoed van die fynste gruis met keurgraad silwer sand bo-oor gesprinkel. Hulle drink baie min wyn, wat die steekpalms baie spraaksaam maak. Oor die algemeen drink hulle drankies van dou vermeng met reën en gegeur met woudblomme en 'n smakie van die ylste vlieswolke.

So trakteer Aslan die Narniane tot lank na sonson- dergang toe die sterre al uit is; en die groot vuur, nou warmer maar minder raserig, soos 'n baken in die donker woude skyn sodat die verskrikte Telmarene dit van ver af sien en wonder wat dit beteken. Die beste van hierdie fees is dat niemand opstaan en wegloop nie; soos die stemme stadiger en stiller word, begin die koppe knik en eindelik raak almal aan die slaap met hul voete na die vuur en goeie vriende aan weerskante van hulle tot die hele kring uiteindelik doodstil is en die geklater van water oor klip by die Drif van Beruna weer gehoor kan word. Maar die hele nag staar Aslan en die maan met oë vol vreugde na mekaar.

Die volgende dag word boodskappers (hoofsaaklik eekhorings en voëls) oor die land gestuur met 'n prokla- masie aan die uitmekaar gejaagde Telmarene — inslui- tende die gevangenes in Beruna. Hulle word in kennis gestel dat Kaspian nou koning is en dat Narnia voortaan net soveel aan die pratende diere en die dwerge en faune en ander wesens behoort as aan mense. Diegene wat onder die nuwe bewind wil aanbly, mag dit doen, maar aan diegene wat nie van die gedagte hou nie, sal Aslan 'n nuwe tuiste gee. Enigene wat soontoe wil gaan, moet teen twaalfuur op die vyfde dag na Aslan en die konings by die Drif van Beruna toe kom. Jy kan jou voorstel hoeveel kopkrappery dit onder die Telmarene veroorsaak het. Sommige van hulle, veral die jonges, het soos Kas- pian stories oor die Outyd gehoor en is in hul skik dat dit nou weer terug is. Hulle maak reeds met die wesens vriende. Hierdie mense besluit almal om in Narnia te bly. Maar die meeste van die ouer mans, veral dié wat belan- grik was onder Miraz, is omgekrap en wil nie in 'n land woon waar hulle nie die septer swaai nie. “Hier woon saam met 'n spul sirkusdiere? Vergeet daarvan,” sê hulle. “En spoke ook,” voeg ander met 'n siddering by. “Dis wat daardie bosnimfe eintlik is. Dis nie normaal nie.” Hulle is ook agterdogtig. “Ek vertrou die goed nie,” sê hulle. “Nie met daardie

aaklige leeu en al nie. Hy sal nie sy kloue van ons kan afhou nie, julle sal sien.” Maar hulle het net so min vertrouwe in sy aanbod om vir hulle ’n nuwe tuiste te gee. “Hy gaan ons natuurlik na sy lêplek neem en een vir een opvreet, dis wat,” brom hulle. En hoe meer hulle met mekaar praat, hoe norser en agterdogtiger raak hulle. Maar op die vasgestelde dag daag meer as die helfte van hulle tog op.

Aslan het twee houtpale aan die kant van die woud laat inslaan, hoër as ’n man se kop en ongeveer drie voet uit mekaar. ’n Derde, ligter stuk hout is bo-op vasgemaak sodat die hele gedoente soos ’n ingang van nêrens na nêrens lyk. Aslan staan daarvóór, met Peter aan sy regter- en Kaspian aan sy linkerkant. Gegroep om hulle is Susan, Edmund en Lucy, Trumpels en Truffelsoeker, Kornelius, Glenstorm, Riepetjiep en nog ’n paar ander. Die kinders en die dwerge het die klerekaste binnegevaar in wat vroeër Miraz se kasteel was en nou Kaspian s’n is, en pronk met goud en sy en sneeuwit linne onder moulose jurke, met silwer maliekoldertunieke en juweelbesette swaardhewwe, met goue helms en kappies vol vere. Hulle is amper te blink om na hulle te kan kyk. Selfs die diere het duur kettings om hul nekke. Tog rus niemand se oë op hulle of die kinders nie. Aslan se maanhare is ’n lewendige, streeklbare goudkleur, en oortref dit alles. Die res van die Ou Narniane staan aan weerskante om die oopte. Aan die verste kant staan die Telmarene. Die son skyn helder en vlaggies wapper in ’n ligte wind.

“Manne van Telmar,” sê Aslan, “julle wat ’n nuwe land soek, luister na my woorde. Ek sal julle na jul eie land stuur, die land wat ek ken en julle nie.”

“Ons onthou nie vir Telmar nie. Ons weet nie waar dit is nie. Ons weet nie hoe dit lyk nie,” brom die Telmarene.

“Julie het uit Telmar na Narnia gekom,” sê Aslan. “Maar julle het van iewers anders na Telmar gekom. Julle behoort glad nie aan hierdie wêreld nie. Julle het geslagte gelede uit dieselfde wêreld waaraan die hoofkoning Peter behoort, hierheen gekom.”

Hierop begin die helfte van die Telmarene kerm, “Daar het julle dit. Het mos gesê. Hy gaan ons almal doodmaak, ons uit die wêreld stuur” en die ander helfte stoot hul borskaste uit en slaan mekaar op die rug en fluister, “Daar het julle dit. Moes geweet het ons behoort nie aan hierdie plek met sy vreemde, nare, onnatuurlike gediertes nie. Ons is van koninklike bloed, julle sal sien.” En selfs Kaspian en Kornelius en die kinders draai met verbaasde uitdrukkinge op hul gesigte na Aslan.

“Vrede,” sê Aslan in die lae stem wat amper ’n grom is. Dis of die aarde effens skud en elke lewende ding in die woud word so stil soos klip.

“Jy, heer Kaspian,” sê Aslan, “het jy dalk geweet jy kan nie die ware

koning van Narnia wees tensy jy, soos die koning van ouds, 'n seun van Adam is nie? En dis wat jy is. Baie jare gelede was daar in daardie wêreld 'n diepsee wat die Suidsee genoem word met 'n skip vol see- rowers wat deur 'n storm na 'n eiland voortgedryf is. En daar het hulle gedoen wat seerowers graag doen: die plaaslike inwoners vermoor en hul vroue as eggenotes geneem en palmwyn gemaak en gedrink en dronk geraak en in die skaduwee van die palmbome gelê en wakker geword en baklei en mekaar soms doodgemaak. En ty- dens een van hierdie rusies het ses van hulle op vlug geslaan en met hul vroue na die middel van die eiland gevlug by 'n berg op en daar, soos hulle gedink het, in 'n grot gaan skuil. Maar dit was een van daardie wêreld se towerplekke, een van die splete of klowe tussen wêreld- de van die Outyd wat deesdae baie skaars is. Dit was een van die laastes: ek sê nie *die* laaste nie. En so het hulle geval of opgestyg of gedwaal of regdeur getuimel en in hierdie wêreld behind, in die land van Telmar, waar daar toe nog nie mense gewoon het nie. Maar hoekom daar nie mense was nie, is 'n lang storie wat ek nie nou gaan vertel nie. Hul afstammeling het in Telmar gewoon en 'n wrede en trotse ras geword; en baie geslagte later was daar hongersnood in Telmar en hulle het Narnia binne- geval, wat toe in wanorde was (maar dis ook 'n lang storie), en dit verower en daaroor geheers. Luister jy, ko- ning Kaspian?"

"Ek luister inderdaad, meneer," sê Kaspian. "Ek wens ek het van eerbaarder mense afgestam."

"Jy stam van die heer Adam en die dame Eva af," sê Aslan. "En dit is 'n groot genoeg eer om die armste bedelaar sy kop te laat lig en 'n groot genoeg skande om die grootste keiser se skouers tot op die aarde te laat hang. Wees tevrede."

Kaspian buig.

"En nou," sê Aslan, "mans en vroue van Telmar, wil julle teruggaan na daardie eiland in die wêreld van mense waarvandaan jul vaders oorspronklik gekom het? Dit is nie 'n slegte plek nie. Die seerowers wat dit eerste gevestig het, het uitgesteef en daar is nou geen inwoners nie. Daar is goeie putte met vars water en vrugbare grond en hout om mee te bou en vis in die strandmere, en die ander mense van daardie wêreld het dit nog nie ontdek nie. Die skeur is oop as julle wil terugkeer, maar ek moet julle waarsku. Wanneer julle deurgegaan het, sal dit vir altyd agter julle toegaan. Daar sal geen verdere kontak tussen die wêreld deur daardie poort wees nie."

Vir 'n ruk is dit stil. Dan tree 'n stewige Telmareense soldaat wat baie ordentlik lyk, vorentoe en sê, "Goed, ek sal die aanbod aanvaar."

"Jy het goed gekies," sê Aslan. "En omdat jy eerste gepraat het, sal jy

sterk towerkrag hê. Jou toekoms in daardie wêreld is verseker. Kom nader.”

Die man wat nou ’n bietjie bleek is, tree vorentoe. Aslan en sy hof staan terug sodat hy vrye toegang tot die leë deurgang van pale het.

“Gaan deur, my seun,” sê Aslan en leun oor en raak met sy neus aan die man s’n. Toe hy die leeu se asem op hom voel, kom daar ’n nuwe blik in die man se oë — ver- baas maar nie ongelukkig nie - amper asof hy iets probeer onthou. Toe maak hy sy skouers reguit en stap deur. Alle oë is op hom. Hulle sien drie stukke hout en deur hulle Narnia se bome en gras on lug nan die ander kant. Hulle sien hoe die man tussen die pale deurslap, on hoe hy binne ’n oogwenk verdwyn.

Aan die ander kant van die oopto begin die agterbly- wende Telmarene kerm. “A! Wat het met hom gebeur? Wil jy ons vermoor? Ons gaan nie daardeur nie.”

En toe sê ’n slim Telmareen, “Ons kan g’n ander wêreld deur daardie pale sien nie. As jy wil hê ons moet jou glo, moet een van *julle* daardeur gaan. Al jou vriende bly ver van daardie pale af”

Onmiddellik tree Riepetjiep vorentoe en buig. “Indien *my* voorbeeld van enige nut sal wees, Aslan,” sê hy, “sal ek en elf muise sonder versuim en met jou verlof deur daardie ingang gaan.”

“Nee, kleintjie,” sê Aslan en laat rus sy ferweelagtig poot ligweg op Riepetjiep se kop. “In daardie wêreld sal hulle vreeslike goed aan jou doen. Hulle sal jou by ker- misse ten toon stel. Daar is ander wat vóór moet gaan.”

“Komaan,” sê Peter skielik vir Edmund en Lucy. “Ons tyd is om.”

“Wat bedoel jy?” sê Edmund.

“Hierdie kant toe,” sê Susan wat lyk asof sy presies weet wat hulle te doen staan. “Tussen die bome. Ons moet ander klere aantrek.”

“Watter klere?” vra Lucy.

“Ons klere natuurlik,” sê Susan. “Ons sal omtrent soos gekke lyk as ons *hierin* op ’n stasie in Engeland se perron beland.”

“Maar ons ander goed is in Kaspian se kasteel,” sê Edmund.

“Nee, dit is nie,” sê Peter en loop na die digste deel van die woud. “Dis alles hier. Dis vanoggend in bondels hierheen gebring. Alles is gereël.”

“Is dit waaroor Aslan vanoggend met jou en Susan gepraat het?” vra Lucy.

“Ja — dit en ander dinge,” sê Peter met ’n somber ge- sig. “Ek kan nie vir julle alles vertel nie. Daar was goed wat hy vir my en Su wou sê, want ons sal nie weer na Narnia toe terugkom nie.”

“Nooit nie?” roep Edmund en Lucy geskok uit.

“Wei, julle twee sal,” antwoord Peter. “Ten minste, uit wat hy gesê het, is

ek redelik seker julle sal weer eendag teruggaan. Maar nie ek en Su nie. Hy sê ons raak te oud.” “O Peter,” sê Lucy. “Hoe aaklig. Dit moet vir jou verskriklik wees.”

“Dis nie só erg nie,” sê Peter. “Dis alles nogal anders as wat ek gedink het. Julle sal verstaan wanneer dit julle laaste keer is. Opskud, hier is ons goed.”

Dit voel vreemd en alles behalwe lekker om hul ko- ninklike klere uit te trek en in hul skoolklere (wat nou nie baie vars is nie) terug na die groot byeenkoms te stap. Een of twee van die meer gemene Telmarene jil. Maar die ander wesens juig en staan op ter ere van Peter, die hoofkoning, en koningin Susan van die Horing en koning Edmund en koningin Lucy. Ou vriende word liefdevol en (in Lucy se geval) tranerig gegroet. Daar is diersoene en drukkies van die boepensbere en Trumpels wat almal se hande wring en ’n laaste kielierige, snor- rige omhelsing van Truffelsoeker. En natuurlik wil Kaspian die horing vir Susan teruggee en natuurlik sê Susan hy moet dit hou. En toe, wonderlik en vreeslik, moet hulle vir Aslan groet, waarna Peter sy plek inneem met Susan se hande op sy skouers en Edmund s’n op hare en Lucy s’n op syne en die eerste van die Telmarene s’n op Lucy s’n en só, in ’n lang ry, beweeg hulle na die deur. Daarna volg ’n oomblik wat moeilik is om te beskryf, want dis of hulle drie dinge tegelykertyd sien. Die eerste is die oop mond van ’n grot wat lei na die glinsterende groen en blou van ’n eiland in die Stille Oseaan waar al die Telmarene sal wees die oomblik dat hulle deur die ingang gaan. Die tweede is ’n oop kol in Narnia, die dwerge en diere se gesigte, Aslan se diep oë en die wit kolle op die ratel se wange. Maar die derde (wat die ander twee blitsig laat verdwyn) is die grys, gruiserige oppervlak van ’n perron op ’n plattelandse stasie en ’n bank met bagasie rondom en hulle wat daar sit asof hulle nooit weg was nie. En vir ’n oomblik is dit ’n bietjie vaal en triestig na alles wat hulle beleef het, maar dan is daar tog ook onverwags die heerlik bekende reuk van treine en die Engelse lug en die somerkwartaal wat voorlê.

“Wel!” sê Peter. “Dit *was* vir jou lekker.”

“Deksels!” sê Edmund. “Ek het my nuwe flits in Narnia laat lê.”

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